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Book Reviews

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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.

Old Swedes again

Colonial Records of the Swedish Churches in Pennsylvania, Volume 5, The Parlin Years, by Peter Stebbins Craig, Editor, and Kim-Eric Williams, Assistant Editor, Swedish Colonial Society, Philadelphia, 2009, hardcover, 286 pages, Swedish Colonial Society, 916 Swanson Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19147. \$25.00 (\$20.00 for members of the Swedish Colonial Society).

Volume 5 of this series of books about the New Sweden churches continues the massive work undertaken by the Swedish Colonial Society in 2006 to record in one place, in English, the documentary history of the Old Swedes churches of Pennsylvania during the Colonial period up to 1786. A total of eight volumes are planned. This volume covers the period from 1750 to 1759, in which the newly assigned pastor Olof Parlin (pronounced Par-leen) served until his death in December, 1757, and includes the time that the Wicaco church was served by his assistant, Eric Nordenlind, who served in 1758 and 1759 pending the arrival of Pastor Carl Magnus Wrangel in 1759.

The decade covered by this book was a time of turmoil both in Sweden

and in the colonies. Sweden was in a period of decline from its "Age of Greatness" which ended with the defeat in 1709 of Karl XII by Peter the Great of Russia at Poltava and Karl's subsequent death in Norway a few years later. During the first part of the 18th century the power of the monarchy declined and became concentrated in the hands of the nobility. Foreign trade with the Far East and elsewhere created some large fortunes and the building of several large manor houses, but the lot of the common people was little improved. Not until reforms begun in 1772 by Gustav III was the power of the Crown restored and a new era of culture began among the aristocracy, called the "Gustavian Period."

In North America, the thirteen colonies were becoming increasingly restive under their British rule. The French and Indian War of 1754–63 increased tensions and served to help unite the colonies in their common grievances. In Philadelphia, the leading city of this period in the colonies, the population continued to increase with mainly English and German settlers. Pennsylvania was also a haven for many groups seeking religious freedom in the New World. The descendants of the New Sweden settlement, now in the fourth and fifth generation, had been intermarrying with other groups and had mostly adopted the English language. Church records were now being kept in English, although the archbishop in Sweden continued to rebuff efforts to conduct services in English despite the fact that few Swedes remained who spoke the language.

As in previous volumes in this series, the authors have relied on assembling and recording the original documents to relate the events of this period, with a minimum of introduction and commentary. Historic maps have been included to illustrate the city and the neighborhoods referred to, with assistance in the introduction to help the reader understand the many changes in place names since the colonial period. The documents are arranged in chronological order, and include letters between the clergy and their superiors in Sweden, letters between the clergy and other Lutheran clergy in Philadelphia (mainly German), journal entries, minutes of parish meetings, and various other letters and meeting records. Many are in the original English, the correspondence with Sweden has been translated from the original Swedish.

Supplementing these documents, many vital records of the period are included. These recorded marriages, baptisms, burials, and deaths from the Wicaco church (Gloria Dei in Philadelphia) and from Manatawney (now St. Gabriel's in Douglassville). An index of personal names is included, as is an index of place names to assist readers who may want to identify individual ancestors or persons and places referred to in the documents. Other members of the Swedish clergy assigned to the New Sweden churches referred to in the years recorded in this book include Pastor Israel Acrelius, who was assigned the dean of the mission, and assigned to invigorating the congregations at Wilmington, Raccoon (Swedesboro), and Penn's Neck

Correction

In the review on page 26 in 2/09, Lilly Setterdahl had the wrong year of her marriage to her husband Lennart. The Setterdahls were married in 1952. SAG apologizes!



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following the deaths of their pastors. Also assigned to the Swedish churches was Pastor John Abr. Lidenius and Pastor Eric Unander, all by the archbishop and consistory in Sweden.

These documents reveal that during this period, the Swedish pastors reached out to form an informal ministerium with other Lutheran pastors in the area, mostly serving the growing German population in Pennsylvania. The leader of the German congregations was Pastor Henry Mühlenberg, who founded the congregation and built the old Augustus Lutheran Church in Trappe, PA, on the old ridge road to Pottstown and Reading. (This reviewer is now a member of this church. The old church was built in 1758 and is maintained in its original unalter-

ed condition. One of Henry's sons was a general in George Washington's army in the Revolution.) Their relations were most cordial with the Swedes, often exchanging pulpits and meeting together regularly.

The correspondence and parish meeting records reveal the difficulties of all pastors serving in the colonial Philadelphia area. Congregations were widely scattered due to population growth and the many outlying farms, mills, iron furnaces, and villages. Travel was difficult with few if any bridges and primitive roads. Horses were needed by pastors to reach outlying congregations and members and much time was consumed in travel. The Swedish pastors also complained of the large numbers of competing sects and often untrained religious leaders, focusing much of their antagonism toward the Moravian sect from Germany and Switzerland, but also less friendly to the many Baptists, Methodists, and other faiths planting roots in the Delaware Valley. Letters between the pastors and Swedish authorities, reading between the lines of the elaborate honorific language of the day, seemed mainly to complain of difficult conditions, inadequate income, services in Swedish to few who still spoke the language, and complaints about one of their fellow pastors who was uncooperative.

It is also very clear that all the pastors involved during this period saw themselves as being on temporary assignment to an overseas mission, not as settlers. They were expected to serve seven years in the Colony, and each was prompt to request relief when their assignment neared an end. (Pastor Parlin died of pleurisy a year or so before his relief, and is buried in Old Swedes Church). This contrasts sharply with current ELCA practice, where pastors may be proposed by the synod bishop, but are reviewed by the congregations before acceptance.

Of particular interest to me were the records of deaths and burials at Gloria Dei Church in Wicaco, which also included some records from the Manatawney church. The 169 deaths recorded between 1750 and 1759 are probably a reasonably representative sampling of the general colonial population of the time. It was shocking to see that of the 169, about a third (33.7%) were infants or children under 5 years. About half were 20 years old or less. 75% were age 50 or less and only ten percent lived to reach age 65. (One old-timer lived to be 91). Unlike today, early deaths in families and among young people were usual mostly due to the many diseases common at the time, though some were due to accidents. Medical care was almost non-existent; a few midwives and folk healers were present and the rare physicians could do little but give comfort. The median age at death was less than 30, contrasted with 78 (80 for women) in the U.S. today.

As part of the projected series of eight volumes, this book becomes a valuable historic resource about the conditions faced by the descendants of the New Sweden Colony during this time period. It is also of great value for researchers, descendants, and forefather members of the Colonial Society. For general readers interested in the history of the colonial period, invaluable insights can be gained from the information included in this collection of documents as a whole. Sponsors of this project include the Swedish Colonial Society, several foundations, and Gloria Dei Church, whose support has all made this project possible. The editors continue to make an invaluable contribution to the history of this period.

Dennis L. Johnson

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Baptisms

December 26th Sarah Grindin, born December 15th 1753, daughter to James & Elizabeth Grindin, North Reading. Sureties: the minister & the child's mother.

1754

Jan. 20th Samuel Jones, born December 13th 1753, son to Nicholas & Judith Jones.

Jan. 20th Mary Bird, born December 23rd 1753, daughter to William Bird, Esquire, & Brigitta Bird.

Feb. 24th Dorothy Mitchell, born January 11th 1754, daughter to Hugh & Isabelle Mitchell.

March 17th John Wearin, born March the 8th 1754, son to James & Hannah Wearin.

March 20th Mary Sands, born January 18th 1754, daughter to John & Catharine Sands.

March 31st Elizabeth Keemer, born December the 2nd 1753, daughter to James & Elizabeth Keemer.

April 10th Peter Roadarmel, born March 11th 1754, son to Leonard & Mary Roadarmel.

April 16th James Thomas, born November 6th 1748 & Isaac Thomas, born August 7th 1752, sons to David & Mary Thomas. Sureties: the father & the minister.

April 30th Michael Huling, born November — 1744, son to Marcus & Rebecca Huling.

May 31st Philip Peter Smith, born 1754, son to John & Barbara Smith.

June 22nd Thomas Dagly, born February 23rd 1754, son to Elias & Catharine Dagly.

June 22nd Robert Taylor, born November 25th 1747, Sarah Taylor, born April 30th 1750 & John Taylor, born December 3rd 1752, children to John & Jane Taylor.

Aug. 2nd Rebecca Allen, born March 24th 1753, daughter to Thomas & Elizabeth Allen, married as she sayeth by one Justice Forster above or the other side of the Susquehanna.

Sept. 1st Elizabeth, born March 18th 1747; Eliazar, born January 16th 1750; Ruth, born May 5th 1752 & Judith, born August 18th 1754, children to James & Margaret Bird.

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The Loggers' life

Pinch River, Growing Up Hard and Fast on the Michigan Frontier, by Helen Godfrey Pike, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho, 2008, softcover, 144 pages, Amazon.com, \$12.99 plus shipping.

If you would like to sample life in a Michigan logging camp in the 1880's for a young immigrant from Sweden and his father, this work of fiction may be just the thing for you or the teenager in your family. Sven Anderson, age 13, and his father have just embarked on an immigrant's journey to America to find work, leaving the rest of their family behind in Sweden to fend for themselves. Their intention is to send for the rest of the family when it becomes possible to do so. The young boy and man travel by the usual route, arriving in America where an Indiana family befriends them for a time. They learn of work to be had in the logging camps of Michigan, and sign on for the winter logging season at a camp near Pinch River.

The father is a fairly skilled carpenter and is put to work building the camp bunkhouses, dining hall, blacksmith shop, and store in the woods near Pinch River. The son, still growing and passing for fifteen years old, goes to work as a camp helper and "brusher," trimming branches from trees after they have been taken down by the loggers. He soon becomes a shanty boy, working with

the cooks and helping tend the horses. His father works in the woods as a logger. They both have to contend with learning English, and with learning to work and live with others of many nationalities and backgrounds.

An entire logging season from the autumn camp building to the spring logging drive is described vividly as seen through the eyes and experiences of the young Sven Anderson. It is a rough existence where the young grow up in a hurry, and the customs of the loggers dictate the relationships between boys and men. Accidents, injuries, and even deaths are almost routine, and there are no health care, sympathy, or unemployment benefits for those who fall victim to the work. The work is hard, the days are long, meals are ample, and pleasures are very few. Most squander their pay and have little to show for a hard season's work when the season ends. Sven's father falls victim to gambling and drink, along with many others, and eventually disappears from the story.

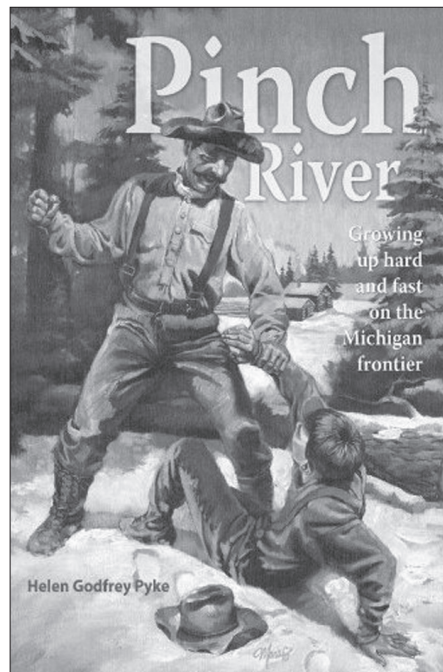
Sven, while disappointed, has larger dreams of life in America. A

broken leg late in the season during the logging drive removes him from the lumberjack life and he again finds shelter and work while his leg mends, with the Indiana family he had met the previous summer. In a brief and abrupt epilogue, we learn that a few years later Sven has married and is homesteading his own land near Brainerd, Minnesota. He also has found the means to send for the remnants of his family in Sweden, his mother and an older sister.

The author of *Pinch River* has been a teacher of writing at Southern Adventist University since 1987, having previously been an elementary and secondary school teacher. She is a native of northern Minnesota, and a graduate of Walla Walla College. She began her writing career in college and has been the author or co-author of several works of fiction on various subjects and historical periods. This story has the ring of plausibility and historical accuracy to it in describing the conditions of logging work in the 1880's. This is no doubt because she and her husband both come from families historically involved in logging, and two of her sons are now loggers in Alabama.

Although a work of fiction, this story is an engaging story which entertains the reader while informing about many of the details and conditions in which Swedish and other immigrants found themselves, as greenhorns arriving in the woods of Michigan at the time, to find work in the logging camps. This kind of rough but ready work allowed many new arrivals to get a start towards a better life in their new land. Teenagers in particular will enjoy this young man's adventures while they learn about the conditions which their grandfathers or great-grandfathers may have had to deal with. Lives which are in sharp contrast with the much less rigorous conditions for young people today.

Dennis L. Johnson





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A Minneapolis Building

Biography of a Building, The Personalities of 2615 Park Avenue, by Mary Jo Thorsheim, PhD, Park Press Minneapolis, 2008, softcover, illustrated, 126 pages, American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, \$16.00 plus shipping.

Visitors to the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis can hardly fail to notice the dignified, large apartment building directly across the street from the Turnblad Mansion, home of the Institute in the 2600 block of Park Avenue. I know it was a matter of curiosity to me each time I made a visit, although I knew nothing of its Swedish connections until this book was published.

As an architect, I admired the stately elegance of this six-story building designed in the Art Deco style of the 1920–1930's, and the fact that even at the age of eighty years it appeared to be well maintained and in good condition, but I knew little more.

In the early 20th century and until World War II, the Park Avenue area and nearby Portland Avenue, from Franklin Avenue to the railroad line at 28th street, was a neighborhood of the residences of many wealthy and important Minneapolis residents. The Turnblad Mansion, home of the wealthy *Svenska Amerikanska Posten* publisher, Swan Turnblad, was completed in 1908. Nearby is the massive Harrington Mansion from

1907, now home of the Zuhrah Shrine organization. Other mansions and large homes line these blocks, mostly dating from the same period. According to the author, Swan Turnblad, his wife, and daughter lived in their mansion for only a short time, finding it too ostentatious for their tastes, and moved across the street to 2615 Park. The Turnblad mansion was later donated to become the home of the American Swedish Institute. Most of the stately homes in the area have over the years been adopted by various non-profit organizations and private businesses, with the passing of their owners. The

prestigious neighborhoods are now around the cities' lakes and in the wealthier suburbs.

2615 Park Avenue survived the changes to this neighborhood, however, and it remains a place of residence for many who prefer apartment living close to the center of the city. Many apartments dating to the same era have since fallen into disrepair or been demolished, perhaps due to less desirable locations, neighborhood decline, or the encroachment of nearby hospitals and institutions in need of land for expansion.

2615 was built to a high standard, has underground parking, and other

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features and amenities that continue to maintain its desirability for many current residents.

The author has undertaken a great deal of original research to chronicle the history of this building, including interviews with the son of one of the builders, Lars Anderson, who served as a building maintenance manager for many years and lived in the buildings before his marriage and later when his family was grown. Lars died in 2004. The building was the conception of two Swedish Americans who had emigrated from the same place in Sweden, the town of Mellerud in Dalsland, where they had lived on neighboring farms. (Coincidentally, Mellerud was also the home of my maternal grandfather who emigrated about a decade earlier). The two men, Carl A. Anderson and Gustav Nelson, first settled in Ironwood, Michigan, but had relocated to Minneapolis by 1907. They began work as builders of, at first, modest dwelling houses and later building apartment buildings in various locations in Minneapolis.

The success of Anderson and Nelson in the 1920's led them to undertake their largest project yet, as developers and builders. After several years of planning, work began on 2615 in 1929, despite the severe depression then just beginning. The building was completed by the end of 1930, and it received immediate status as a prestige building in a then popular location. They had engaged another Swedish American, Martin Lindquist, as the architect for the building. Martin was born in Minneapolis of Swedish parents and was an active member of the First Covenant Church in downtown Minneapolis,

known to many as the "Swedish Mission Tabernacle." He had studied at the University of Minnesota and had been in practice for about ten years in 1930. The building was laid out as a double 'E' with wings front and rear to create light and views for the many apartments on each of six floors. A garage for residents' cars is below the building with an entrance at the rear, on Columbus Avenue. The building was set well back from Park Avenue with a broad lawn and driveway leading to the main front entrance.

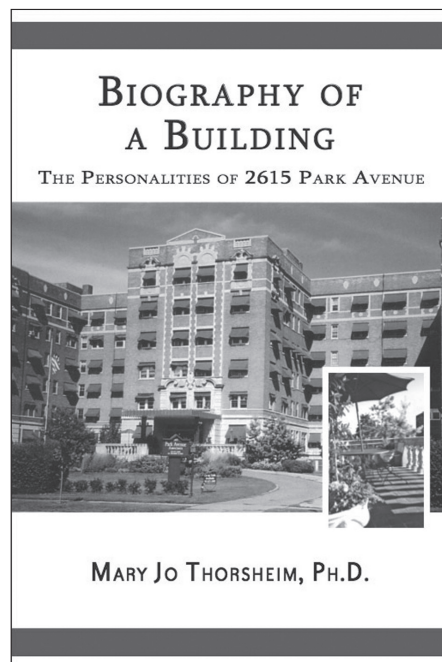
The building has roots in the New York concept of luxury high-rise apartments with many services provided within the building. It was innovative at its time for Minneapolis and has maintained its popularity for eight decades. The original builders managed the building on behalf of its businessman owner-investors until 1947, with Lars V. Anderson, son of Carl (C.A.) Anderson, as the building manager.

In 1947, the 116 residents took steps to convert the building into a cooperative, in which the tenants all purchased shares in the building to become co-owners. Not all residents

were in agreement with this plan, however, and it took several months to conclude the deal. Management was now in the hands of a new board of directors elected from among the residents. A fiftieth anniversary gala occurred in 1997 to celebrate this milestone in the life of 2615.

Most of the remaining chapters in this book are devoted to a description of various residents and notables who have lived in the building. Residents included business and community leaders, professionals, teachers and professors, writers and musicians, and other prominent residents of the city. Other chapters describe the history of "Loretta's Tea Room," which was a social center for the building for many years, as was the old laundry, where hired staff washed and ironed for many residents. Many residents were Swedish or Scandinavian, but by no means exclusively. Some prominent residents included writer Bruce Rubenstein, sportswriter Charlie Johnson, writer Steven Polansky, film impresario Ted Mann, and conductor Eugene Ormandy. There are even unverified rumors that Amelia Earhart lived at 2615 for a time. Other anecdotes about past residents are included together with interesting accounts of the many services provided in the building. The building became especially popular with part-time residents who spent parts of the year elsewhere, or traveled abroad, or had a lake home where they would spend most of their summers.

The author, Mary Jo Thorsheim, is a current resident and has become acquainted with many of the residents. She studied at St. Olaf College, the University of Oslo, and the University of Minnesota. She is an importer of prints and paintings from Scandinavia to the U.S. and lectures on Scandinavian arts and artists. She is also a researcher and consultant in occupational therapy, health, and





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Finlanders in Stockholm – A new CD

human services and is a writer of grant proposals and research projects. Many photographs of 2615 Park Avenue, neighboring buildings, its residents, and others connected with the construction of the building are included. The book as a whole presents one more interesting facet of the unique Swedish American history of Minneapolis, which is such an integral part of the growth and life of that city.

Dennis L. Johnson

As a part of the remembrance of the year 1809, when Sweden and Finland were divided into two separate countries after having been one for at least 600 years, the Stockholm City Archives (*Stadsarkiv*) has released a new CD. It is called *Finländare i Stockholm* (Finlanders in Stockholm) and is only available in *Swedish* or *Finnish*.

The CD has a wealth of information, with hundreds of articles, pictures, and maps. The contents are divided into several sections: Middle Ages, People and Gentry, Everyday and Feasts, Crime and Punishment, Congregation and Societies, Years of

War, Life and Quarrels, and at last, Turn of the Century (1900).

A big part is the database, which contains about 13,800 individuals, and has information on Finlanders from the late 1400s to the 1900s from various sources: court and church records, newspapers, and much more.

The maps are also fascinating; here you get a good color picture of the oldest map of Stockholm from 1625. Newer ones go to the 1930s, and many maps of Finland from about 1680 to 1918.

This CD sells for 100 SEK. Anyone interested in buying one can contact the SAG Editor.

New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

The new *Swedish Family Register 2010* (*Svenska Släktkalendern 2010*) has just been published. It is a book of family genealogies, in *Swedish*, for about 60 Swedish families with dates as recent as August 2009. This volume is # 45 in a series that started in 1885. For more information and a list of families, see

www.svenskaslaktkalendern.se/

Well-known archivist *Per Clemenson* of Göteborg has written a number of manuals for Swedish Genealogy in Swedish during the years in company of his co-author *Kjell Anderson*. Now this team has published a new basic manual, in *Swedish*, geared towards younger researchers who need to conquer the 1900s before entering the land of church records. The book is called *Börja släktforska. Genvägar till din släkts historia*. It is full of good hints on how to use the information from the tax authorities (*Skatteverket*), the various CD:s, the SVAR website, and much more. It sells for about 219 SEK + postage. More information can be had by e-mailing <info@genealogi.se>

Family Tree Magazine (November 2009) has a number of articles on how to trace immigrant ancestors online, and the tips here can be used to track elusive Swedes too. Mentioned are all the NARA passenger list, and it is noted that they are available on Ancestry with indexes, as well as Castle Garden and Ellis Island. The Hamburg lists are explained. Naturalizations can also be important, and can also be found at Ancestry and Footnote. There are several research examples, but none from Sweden(!).

Family Tree Magazine (December 2009) has an article on how to trace European ancestors, and gives some good advice, like doing the proper homework before trying to go overseas, and also trying to find out the original name. A man emigrated from Sweden by the name Oskar Wilhelm Lundqvist, who then changed his name to Oscar Williams(!) is not so easy to trace. This issue has also a good guide on how to use the Mormon web site *FamilySearch*, including the new *Record Search Pilot*, where there are many new and useful databases, but perhaps not so easy to navigate.

The British TV program *Who Do You Think You Are?* (now even having a Swedish version) has evolved into a monthly glossy magazine with the same name, which is quite interesting, especially for those with British roots.