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# Lars Ljungmark in Memoriam

1927–2005

Dr. Lars Ljungmark, Göteborg, has passed away at age 78. He spent a large part of his academic career as an associate professor of history at Göteborg University, from where he also earned his Ph.D. in history in 1971. Ljungmark was one of Sweden's leading historians of the migration of some 1.3 million Swedes to the U.S. and Canada during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Already in 1965 he wrote and hosted the very successful radio series "Den stora utvandringen" (The Great Emigration) for which he also wrote a book with the same name. This very useful one-volume survey of the history of

Swedish migration to America was translated as *Swedish Exodus* in 1979, and reissued again in 1996.

His 1971 study *For Sale – Minnesota: Organized Promotion of Scandinavian Immigration 1866-73* dealt with ways in which Minnesota became one of the premier destinations in the New World for Swedish immigrants. He also studied Swedes in Canada, as is evident in his *Svenskarna i Winnipeg. Porten till prärien 1872-1940 (The Swedes in Winnipeg: The Gateway to the Prairie, 1872-1940)* from 1994. In recent years he was heavily involved with the research project "Göteborgsemigranten" (The Göteborg Emigrant) in which a multitude of perspectives on

the history of emigration from Göteborg were presented in numerous publications.

Lars Ljungmark was a well-known and greatly admired scholar, teacher, and friend. He made numerous trips to North America and was a frequent guest and lecturer in many contexts in the U.S. and Canada. His generous nature and sense of humor were remarkable, and he will be greatly missed by friends and colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic.

*Dag Blanck*

*Director of Swenson Center*

## *The cradle story – what happened next*

As was told in SAG 2005:3, a man came into the House of Genealogy in Leksand carrying a huge cradle in his arms and asked "Am I related to this cradle?"

There were many initials and dates carved into the back of the cradle and the family could easily be identified in the Ål church records. The owner was not related to that family, but later donated the cradle to the House of Genealogy.

But what happened to the original owners? They were Björ Mats Matsson and his wife Kerstin Andersdotter from Ål parish in Dalarna. They had 12 children, but infant death took its toll, and only two survived until adulthood. Among the children were four Anders, two Karins, two Annas and two Mats.

One Mats and one Anders grew up. Anders became a carpenter and

had no children.

Anders married and had three children, of which son Olof, born 18 May 1836 in Ål, survived. He became a soldier in the Gagnef company of the Dalregementet and used the surname Hedberg. He married and had four children.

In 1859 he was sentenced to two years of hard labor and lost his honor, as he was proved to be a counterfeiter of coins.

Ten years later, 15 Nov. 1869, he leaves his home in N. Heden 1 in Ål for America and never comes back.

If the intention was that the family should come later, the plans were never realized.

In all the later clerical surveys the husband is recorded as "living in America."

The children grew up and the family spread out. What happened



to Olof is not to be found in Swedish sources. There was no legal divorce, but he could still have started a new family in the U.S.; but where? Did he have new children who knew little or nothing about their siblings in Sweden?

The old grey cradle tells a piece of our history, but the wheels of history keeps rolling and we can only pick up small pieces of the puzzle and put them together into new stories.

*Stenåke Petersson*