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A Glimpse of a Pioneer

In a recently published book *1840-talets verkliga uppsalastudent* (The real student of the 1840s), Editor: Torgny Nevéus. Bokförlaget Atlantis, 2004, an interesting item was found.

In this collection of letters to the future professor of law at Uppsala University *Herman Rydin* from a number of his friends and cousins during their undergraduate days in the 1840s, there is one note that does give a glimpse of a pioneer immigrant.

The pioneer is *Gustaf Unonius* who emigrated with his new wife from Uppsala in 1841 and settled in Pine Lake, Wisconsin, and after a few years moved to Chicago. In 1858 he returned to Sweden and later published his memoirs, *Minnen från en sjuttonårig vistelse i nordvästra*

Amerika (published in English as *A Pioneer in Northwest America 1841-1858: The Memoirs of Gustaf Unonius* [1959]).

On 15 April 1841 young Nils von Sydow writes to his cousin Herman Rydin: "I will mention something about the county bookkeeper Unonius. He was the one who held that praised temperance speech last fall. He seems to have found out that he hardly could find a suitable income in Sweden – and has thus embraced the idea of travelling to America. Before he leaves he is to marry a young Miss Öhrströmer, and will take her along on his travels, which are to start in a few weeks. First they go to New York, and from there across America ca. 100 miles to its western coast, where he will buy a

small holding to work as a colonist. For that end he has been training in many different professions here in the city to be prepared for anything. He held a Declamatory-Musical Soirée, which gave him an income of almost 400 Riksdalers. I know all this in detail from a friend's friends, of which one lives in the Öhrströmer house."

According to *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in the United States*, by Nils William Olsson and Erik Wikén (1995), p. 190, Gustaf Unonius and Charlotta Margareta Öhrströmer were married on 26 April 1841 in Uppsala, got their passports in Uppsala 16 May 1841, and left on *Minnet* of Gävle, landing in New York on 11 September 1841.

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