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Swedes in Wilhelmina, Canada

A tradition is tested against the records

BY INGALENA MARTHIN

The first issue for 1987 of the journal *Västerbotten* had emigration as its theme. In the article "From Wilhelmina to Wilhelmina" by Per-Uno Ågren, there is a story about the people from Wilhelmina parish who immigrated to Camrose in Alberta, Canada, and there founded a congregation, which they named Wilhelmina. The contacts between Wilhelmina, Sweden, and Camrose have been kept alive. New contacts are still being made.

According to the story, among the first to arrive was *Inga Gustava* of Granliden who first immigrated to Minnesota, married a Norwegian man, *Jakob Lunde*, and then came to Canada before 1900. The Lundes settled in Lundemo, close to Hay Lakes. Inga Lunde then wrote home and told about the fertile land and enticed several friends and relatives to come.

It is said that her brother *Nils Magnus Jonsson* was among the first to be attracted by her letters. Inga Gustava Johansdotter, born 1860, was a daughter of *Johan Ersson* of Granliden. She had a brother *Johan*, born 1862, who was the only surviving son of Johan Ersson, since her other brother, *Erik*, had died in 1860, age 13. Despite the story, there is no

son Nils Magnus listed in the records.

Son Johan assumed the surname *Liedegren* and moved to Härnösand 28 April 1888. On the 16th of November that same year Inga Gustava also moved to Härnösand, and according to the article in *Västerbotten*, they both emigrated later.

I have followed those siblings in the church records of Härnösand and other places. Inga Gustava moved back to Granliden 24 January 1890 and moved on the 5th of December 1892 to Katarina parish in Stockholm, where she lived at the Timmermannen block 20, 21. In 1894 she moved to Klara parish, where she worked as a maid in the household of Klara Viström at Vasagatan 1 for about a year. On the 11th of November 1895 she moved to Eskilstuna, but came back to Stockholm a few years later and then lived in the Hedvig Eleonora parish, from where she moved on 14th of August 1900.

Inga Gustava gave birth to her son *Erik Melker* on 30 August 1901; she is then called "the unmarried trades woman" (*ogifta handelsidkerskan*) and lived at Fleminggatan. She died 23 December 1910 in Stora Malm parish in Södermanland, but her son had already moved 31st August as a foster child to Granliden, where he lived with his aunt, *Kajsa Maria Gavelin*, until 7 December 1923, when he moved to Gustav Vasa parish in Stockholm.

There is no record that Inga Gustava ever emigrated.

What about the brother?

Johan Johansson Liedegren moved in 1893 from Härnösand to Katarina parish in Stockholm. He lives alone and is listed as a former grocer liv-

ing at the Timmermannen block. On the 31st of October 1895 he moved to Eskilstuna Kloster parish and seems to have married there. By 1901 he is back in Stockholm with his family, consisting of *Hildegard Maria Wickberg*, born 1865, son *John Harry*, born 1898 in Eskilstuna, and daughter *Hildur Maria*, born 1900 in Kungsholm, Stockholm. They all lived for a short while in the Kejsaren block in Katarina before moving to Solna parish, just outside Stockholm, in 1901. Johan's profession is given as business teacher (*handelslärare*). In Solna more children are born; daughter *Ingeborg Katarina* in 1903, and son *Knut Emil* in 1905. In the next year, 20 July 1906, the family moved to Stora Malm parish, where daughter *Elsa Linnea* was born in 1913. Johan Johansson Liedegren died there 6 October 1923. Johan Johansson Liedegren did not emigrate either.

Who was Inga Lunde?

Prior to a trip to Alberta in Canada we read about the area, and among other things the article in *Västerbotten*. I had earlier read that a cousin of my grandfather's, mentioned in the article, should have come to the Hay Lakes area. This turned out to be wrong. There were also other matters in the article that I felt were doubtful, but as it was a good and well-known genealogist who had written the article, it must be right!

Then I read a letter from a grandchild of Nils Magnus Jonsson, in which she mentions that Inga Lunde was the sister of her maternal grandfather (*morfar*) and that they did not know of a brother Johan. There was also a copy of the exit permit (*utflyttningsbetyg*) of Nils Magnus Jonsson,



Wilhelmina church in Västerbotten, Sweden.

so now I could check in the church records and find out who they were.

I found that *Nils Magnus Jonsson* was born 1866 in Blaikliden, son of Jonas Gustaf Gustafsson of Dorris, in his turn a son of Gustaf Arvidsson. The name of his sister was *Ingrid Maria*, and she was born 1848 in Dorris. Ingrid Maria had worked as a maid at several places in the Malgomaj Valley; for instance, 5 years at Rönnäs, a couple of years at Granliden by the Ivarssons, and in Djupdal from 1879 to 1888.

She had a son *Anton Carl Oskar*, born 1873, who died in 1883 from diphtheria.

Ingrid Maria leaves

A few years later, on 27 June 1888, she gets her moving certificate to go to America. On this she is called Inga Maria, which she has also been called in the clerical survey ever since she came to Djupdal. Earlier the same year several people from the villages of Djupdal, Laxbäcken, Tjäl, Skog, and others nearby had emigrated. Many of them came to northern Minnesota and the soon-to-be Roseau County. Most people from our area travelled by Trondheim in Norway. Ingrid Maria travelled in the company of the Risbergs of Andersmark and Erik Matsson Blomqvist of Djupdal through the main port of Göteborg, and they all had tickets for Stephen, Minnesota.

The Risberg family, as well as many other Vilhelmina emigrants, were charter members of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Roseau at its founding in 1890.

I had the opportunity to read their Book of Members and found many names from Vilhelmina. The Risberg family were listed as members; at the bottom of one page the names Jakob Lunde of Norway and his wife Inga Maria from Sweden are found. Unfortunately there are no dates for either of them. One can find Jakob and Inga Maria as witnesses of baptisms until 1896. I have not been able to find them in the 1900 U.S. census.

To Canada

According to the article in *Västerboten* and in the history of the Wilhelmina congregation in Canada, the Lundes came from Minnesota to Canada in 1900. In a 50th Anniversary publication of the Wilhelmina Church it is told that the Lundes came to the Lundemo district, north of Wetaskiwin District in Alberta, in 1900. They wrote to their friends, like the Selins of Rönnäs, and told them about the land and the possibilities in Canada. They also took in new arrivals until they had got their own place going. Also, the brother Nils Magnus Jonsson came. They all wrote home and encouraged more Vilhelmina families to come. Soon they founded their own congregation, which was given the name Wilhelmina, and they built a church patterned after the one back in Sweden.

In their Book of Members I have not found the Lunde family, even though Inga Maria was in charge of the Sunday School between 1909 and 1915, according to the publication "Each step left its mark."

Inga Lunde is buried in Wilhelmina cemetery, but there are no dates on the stone for her, and she could not be found in the list of burials. Jakob Lunde is buried in the cemetery by Fridhem church; he died in 1908 and was then 74 years old. The Lundes did not have children of their own, but took care of a girl Petra, who was born in Crookston, Minnesota, in 1886.

The Census

The Canadian census of 1901 for the Hay Lakes area shows the family like this:

Jakob O Lunde, born 1834
Inga M. Lunde, born 1847
Foster daughter Petra B., born 1886

The 1906 census for District 21, subdistrict 19B shows the family like this:

Lundy, Jacob, 72 years, born in Norway
Emma, 57 years, born in Sweden
Petra, 18 years, born in the U.S.A.

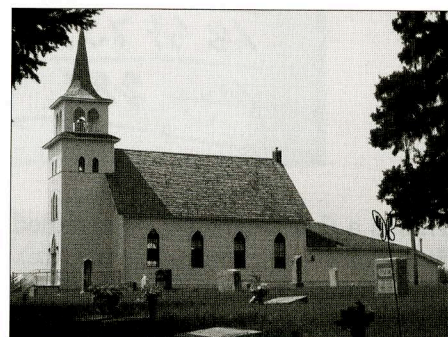
All of them came to the area in 1900.

In the *Index of Land transactions* at the Canadian National Archives I have found Jakob Olsen Lunde as buyer of land in Lundemo. In another index, of buyers of land from the Canadian Pacific Railroads, I have found Jakob Lunde and Axel Selin in 1901. I have also sent queries to researchers in Alberta and to those archives to try to find the birth dates of the Lundes. That might answer the question if Inga Lunde was identical with Ingrid Maria Jonsdotter from Blaikliden in Vilhelmina.

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Wilhelmina, south of Edmonton. Helge Nelson mentions in his *The Swedes and the Swedish Settlements in North America* (1943) that this district south of Edmonton has the largest number of Swedish-born rural population in Canada. This shows in more place names like *New Sweden*, *Falun*, *Westerose*, *Calmar*, and *Malmö*.



Wilhelmina church near Camrose, Alberta, Canada.