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Cover picture:
This is Dagmar Gavert, age 2, in her home in Sioux City, IA. Dagmar later married Nils William Olsson. (Karna Olsson picture collection.)
A Visit with the Children in the Woods

A short stay among the Swedes in Northern Maine

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

In late April of this year my husband, Bengt, and I had the opportunity to visit with Karna Olsson (daughter of Nils William Olsson, SAG Editor Emeritus) and her husband Phil Brown in their home in Belfast, Maine.

We were attracted not only by their company, but also by the possibility of a visit to the Swedish colony of New Sweden in northernmost Maine. Both Karna and her brother Chris, also living near Belfast, had lived for years in New Sweden, and Phil is also familiar with the area, as he had lived in Presque Isle and Caribou, the two bigger towns of the area.

So early one morning we all boarded Phil’s huge van and headed north. After picking up Chris in Stockton Springs, we drove north for another hour and landed in Bangor. There was now time for breakfast at the famous truckstop Dysarts, where one can have breakfast 24 hours a day. It was interesting to see the different choices: bacon and eggs, fruit salad and omelet, hamburgers, blueberry pancakes, and huge cinnamon buns.

On the road again we continued north for another couple of hours and finally reached Presque Isle, the capital of Aroostook County. On our way north we had seen many of the peculiar potato barns, where the roof seems to meet with the ground, a method of keeping the right temperature for the potatoes.

By then we had said good-bye to the highway and were now driving on country roads through fairly open, but hilly, landscape towards a more forested area.

Gustavus Adolphus Church

Suddenly coming up a little hill, there was a church on the right side of the road, which turned out to be the now infamous church of the arsenic poisoning in the spring of 2003. It is hard to believe that such an event has happened here in this rural and very quiet area, but the facts tells otherwise. One man died of poisoning and others are still feeling the effects of the deed. Why this happened is the big question. One man committed suicide the week after, which some take as a token of guilt, but other explanations are also possible. The police are still working on the case. Two books are in the making about this drama, one by outsider Christine Young, whose book is named A Bitter Brew – Faith, Poison and Power in a small New England Town. The other book is
The cemetery

The next stop was the cemetery, and some of us walked and read the inscription on the stones. At other cemeteries we have visited, where old Swedish immigrants are buried, in Chisago and Center City, Minnesota, for instance, it seems to have been the custom to mention the home parish in Sweden. Here we found very few stones with that info, but from reading the dates, it was easy to guess where the early immigrants were buried.

For a Swede it is always a special feeling to visit a cemetery with those familiar names, knowing that they made their last home so far from their roots. One is inclined to guess if they were happy in their new land, pleased with what they had achieved here, which would not have been possible in the Old Country? Or if they ached for the old home, for parents and brothers and sisters that stayed?

During our visit to the cemetery an older man appeared and spoke to Bengt, and was much surprised when he heard that Bengt was a genuine Swede. At once this man changed to almost perfect Swedish, and presented himself as Alwyn Espling, of Swedish heritage. Alwyn mentioned that he had the keys to the local museum and offered to open it for us in the afternoon.

By noon we visited the friendly home of Dan and Megan Olson, who live in an older house that they are renovating. The talk became lively as the “genealogy” of the house was discussed. “Isn’t this the house that so-and-so built in 1906, but has it been moved since?” was one of the questions. And all of them were quickly answered by Megan’s mother Helen Espling, a long-time teacher/principal in New Sweden, who knows all family relationships like her own backyard. Unfortunately she has no intention of entering them into a computer program, and seemed satisfied with just knowing them. Maybe the younger generation can get started on that, when the house is done?

Helen told a fascinating story about her great-grandmother Christina Sunnergren from Kållandsö in Västergötland. She was married to a much older man, and they emigrated. He died and Christina remarried to a man named Carl Johan Börjeson, and lived in Woodland, south of New Sweden. The marriage was a mistake and Christina returned to Sweden, where she lived with a son from her first marriage. That turned out to be another mistake and Christina wanted to return to the U.S. and wrote her daughter Maja Lisa in Woodland, who sent her mother travel money, without telling her own husband. Christina lived with the younger family until she died, but supported herself by spinning and weaving for people.

This was just one of the stories about the pioneers that are very much in danger of being lost, if no one takes care that they are saved in some way, on paper, on tape, on video, or on the computer.

Dan, who works full-time in Caribou, seems to be one of the few younger ones in the area to take an interest in the history of New Sweden, but cannot cope by himself to rescue all traditions and stories.

Other discussions during lunch showed many similarities between New Sweden and many areas in Sweden, where people have been dependant on farming and forestry to make a living. When easier and better jobs are found in the cities the young people leave, and the original area has an aging population with very few young ones to care for them.

Many houses looked empty, but at least some of them get a new lease on life during the summer when descendants come back to enjoy life closer to nature than in the cities.

To the Capitol
After lunch we went back to the Museum, which we now understood was the old Capitol, one of the first buildings in the town, which had been used as a meeting place for the inhabitants for many years. Alwyn now waited for us and was eager to show all the treasures that tell about people long gone but once important in the history of the town.

On the main floor were many huge photos of important men, furniture, and books, many in Swedish, and much more. Upstairs one could admire the long skis, used by the Swedes, to the amazement of their American neighbors. Here we also saw some big chests, used for transatlantic travel. One had the simplistic inscription “Signe Granlund, Kolstubb”, her very own spelling of Quebec. Here one could also find numbers of old tools, including many well-worn axes and saws, from a time well before the advent of power tools.

After the tour of the museum we drove on and covered most of the New Sweden area, including Stockholm, which did not now amount to much more than a crossroads. We passed the cemetery in Jemtland, and went through Westmanland. Those names are reminders that the New Sweden inhabitants came from many places in the Old Country. Karna and Chris did a running commentary on all the changes in the landscape since the early 1970s, mostly commenting on how overgrown many fields had become and how sad and lonely many abandoned and forgotten farms looked. The closure of an Airforce base in the area has not helped the job situation either. It is a familiar tune for us, as we spend time in the summer in the Bergslagen area in Sweden, where the mine jobs are no more, nor are many hands needed in the forests anymore after the big machines have come.

Despite problems with jobs and depopulation, one could see that New Sweden is still a living community. It needs more new people with new ideas on how to make the assets of the area useful for new jobs.

For the people of the big cities it is within commuting distance, and they would enjoy the forests, rivers, and lakes, and learn to appreciate the old Swedes that broke the land 135 years ago.

We hope that maybe more Swedes would come and find their emigrants in New Sweden’s records, and we hope to be back ourselves one day.
The Start of New Sweden

New Sweden, Maine, is mostly the result of the efforts of one man

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

During the 1860s the governing men of Maine discovered that their state was the only one losing people, except New Hampshire. All other states increased their number of inhabitants, either by births or by immigrants. Most of the immigrants that arrived in the U.S. from Europe preferred to settle in the Midwest, where lands prices were low or even free, and the climate temperate. Also they discovered that many of the new settlers of Maine were French Canadians, and they became worried that the northern part of Maine would become French-speaking.

The solution to the problem appeared to be to make sure that prospective immigrants were told about the good sides of Maine as a farming country, also to promise them free land and a cabin and other benefits, if they decided to go to Maine.

What kind of immigrants did the government wish for? They wanted tall, stout, and hardy men, used to hardship, frugal, and religious and the same qualities in the women. In fact, they wanted Scandinavians, as they were regarded as good workers, and also were used to the type of climate.

On March 23, 1870, the Maine House of Representatives passed a law authorizing a Board of Immigration, consisting of the governor, a land agent, and the secretary of state. Within two days they appointed William Widgery Thomas, Jr. as their commissioner. He had earlier lived for three years in Sweden and felt he knew the country and its people.

William Widgery Thomas, Jr. (1839-1927).

Mr. Thomas immediately put his affairs in order and sailed for Sweden on 30 April, and landed in Göteborg on 16 May.

Now he was faced with the problem of letting the public know about the favorable conditions for emigrants to Maine. He hired captain G. W. Schröder as his agent in Göteborg, and he himself travelled all over the country, giving talks in Swedish. He had special agents hired for the northern counties. He produced notices, advertisements, brochures, and circulars, and sent them all over Sweden.

Prospective emigrants were told that they were to pay their own passage, and that they must have a testimony of good conduct from their clergyman, and that they should know a craft, like carpentry, besides being experienced farmers.

Soon people applied from all parts of Sweden and by Midsummer 1870 the first group of colonists gathered in Göteborg. The group consisted of twenty-two men, eleven women, and eighteen children. To cite Mr. Thomas “All were tall and stalwart, with blue eyes, light hair, and cheerful, honest faces; there was not a physical defect or blemish among them, and it was not without some feelings of state pride that I looked upon them as they were mustered on the deck of the Orlando, and anticipated what great results might flow from this little beginning for the good of Maine.”

Where were the homes of the emigrants?

The group has been found in the Göteborg Police Chamber lists of emigrants, all with tickets for Halifax. However, only 45 of them were listed, the others may have been missed in the keyboarding into the database which is not unusual.

The surprising thing is that they came from such different areas of the country. There were 8 from Nordermaling in Västerbotten (the Jonas Bodin family), 1 from Uppland, 1 from Östergötland, 1 from Småland, 14 from Skåne, 9 from Halland, 7 from Västergötland, 2 from Karlstad and 2 from Mora in Dalarna. It is amazing that the info in a few weeks had reached so many different areas, in a time without Internet or TV or other fast ways of communications.
Over the North Sea and further

According to Mr. Thomas' story the group had a bad crossing over the North Sea, and did not reach Hull until on 27 June, after three days. Next day they took the railway to Liverpool, where they had to wait for another three days until boarding City of Antwerp on 2 July. The ship belonged to the Inman Line.

On the Wednesday 13 July they all landed at Halifax, where the inhabitants were shy of the new immigrants, who had to spend the night in a vacant warehouse. Next day they travelled on to the city of St. John, where they boarded a steamer on the St. John river, bound for Fredericton. There the river was too shallow for boats, so their baggage had to be put on barges and towed along, which took six days before they got to Tobique Landing, where they all debarked. After resting they left the next day for the final stage by teams of wagons to go to Maine. At ten o'clock they reached the border and "beneath us lay the broad valley of Aroostook. The river glistened in the sun, and the white houses of Fort Fairfield shone brightly among the green fields along the river bank." When the party crossed the border they were greeted by a cannon shot from Fort Fairfield, and the land agent gave a speech. At noon they reached Fort Fairfield and were greeted by all the inhabitants, and given a big meal. Then they continued west and reached the town of Caribou, where they spent the night.

Arrival

The next day, 23 July, less than a month after leaving Göteborg, they found themselves at a crossroads in the forest, where they were told that the center of New Sweden was going to be. The arrival was celebrated by speeches of Mr. Thomas and others, and others heard the lure from the huge factories in the Worcester, Mass., area and moved there.

Mr. William Widgery Thomas always kept an interest for the well-being of the Swedes in Aroostook, "his Children in the Woods" and visited them often.

Next year and then

During the winter the settlers had corresponded with family and friends, and next year several groups of new settlers came. And the next year and the next and the colony grew. Some stayed on and still have descendants living there, others left for more southern places, somewhat disappointed after having found that the farming soil was very thin and the growing season short.

Many stayed in Maine, but many others heard the lure from the huge factories in the Worcester, Mass., area and moved there.

Mr. William Widgery Thomas always kept an interest for the well-being of the Swedes in Aroostook, "his Children in the Woods" and visited them often.

Some Census figures

1870–1950

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Further reading:


Maine’s Swedish Pioneers, author James S. Leamon, in SPHQ 1975:2.


Church records

For New Sweden there are records from 1st Baptist Church (1871–), Evangelical Covenant Church (1886–) and Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church (1871–). For Stockholm there are records from 1st Baptist Church (1904–) and Oscar Fredrick Lutheran Church (1906–).
At www.arkion.se you will find the decennial censuses as searchable databases
1890 is complete and contains 4 800 000 individuals
1900 - 3 300 000 individuals
1880 - 281 000
1870 - 170 000
1860 - 12 000
A total of 8 563 000 posts and constantly growing.

You will find information on family status, occupation, place of birth, other members of the household with different names and much more. In the 1900 census most posts are linked to images of the original pages.

You may add your own information for other researchers too see, or find information others have added.

Released prisoners

At www.arkion.se there is a database of released prisoners during the period of 1876-1925. The information on each prisoner contains information on his name, place of birth, current sentence and previous convictions, personal description (hair and eye color etc) and a photograph.

www.arkion.se is constantly growing

Find your ancestors

Where do you find it all? www.arkion.se
The databases are in English, still need help, look at our translation help, still need help?
Contact support@arkion.ra.se and we will do our best to guide you right.
Arkion Storgatan 77 881 31 Sollefteå Sweden +46 620 259 10

Swedish American Genealogist 2004:2
Listening to the Prairie

The old Jansson homestead in Minnesota is visited by a descendant. Part II

By Dennis L. Johnson

Winter

The first crop of wheat had been pretty good. With the help of neighbors in exchange for his own, Jonas had successfully harvested nearly a thousand bushels of wheat, enough for at least ten wagon loads to be hauled in to St. Peter for sale. Even after buying a supply of flour, molasses, sugar, salt, and other items, Jonas had over fifty dollars left in his pocket, more money than he had ever seen before. Now it was time to prepare for the long, cold winter his neighbors told him about. He, Lars, and Ephraim worked hard for many days cutting, hauling, and stacking firewood from a woods by the stream some distance away, until he felt he must have enough to last the winter. They would burn the wood for heat, and cook on the cast-iron stove they had bought at the general store in St. Peter. Other chores kept them busy: building a chicken house and a better outhouse, digging a deeper well, and preparing their house for winter.

Indoors chores

Stina and the girls found time to prepare also, besides their normal housekeeping and cooking. Stina taught the girls to knit and sew, and many pairs of wool socks and several sweaters were knitted, clothes were repaired, and even the sacks from the flour they had bought were put to use for everyday dresses and shirts. Worn-out clothes and other rags were collected and cut into strips, the strips sewed end to end, then braided to make rugs for the floor of their dugout. Some of the other Swedish ladies at church meetings had told her of the American custom of Thanksgiving, late in November, when the harvest was in. They all celebrated by roasting one of their new hens over an open fire, with biscuits and gravy.

First Christmas

It was not long after that Stina first felt her baby move. Her thoughts turned to what she would do when the baby came in March. Babies were still usually born in bed, a doctor was at least four hours away by horseback. This was to be her seventh childbirth, and everything had gone all right before. Now she was 43 years old, however, and it had been three years since poor little Johannes was born. Well, she mustn't worry, she had her family with her and several of her new neighbors were experienced and could be summoned when her time came. She had not expected this baby, they had enough to do with all the farm- and house-work, but she had little choice in the matter. She would put her trust in God.

Just before their first Christmas on the farm, a terrible storm came. Jonas had been to see a neighbor with a sick calf, and gone to his farm to try to be of help. When the snow and wind came, he headed for home. He had heard about these storms the Americans called "blizzards." He could hardly see to find the way and by the time he reached his own house the snow was several inches deep. It snowed steadily for two days and two nights, and the wind howled and shook the door. Snow blew in around the window curtains, and piled up on the floor. Jonas had to dig his way out the door to get more firewood for the stove, and did not try to go any further. On the third morning it dawned bright and clear, and the wind had died down quite a bit. The snow lay nearly two feet deep on the ground, with a drift in front of the house almost as high as the roof. The temperature kept falling, colder and colder, until it was colder than Jonas had ever experienced in Sweden. The snow would squeak as he walked down the well-trodden path to the outhouse, and frost formed on his beard. He busied himself carving a few new serving bowls from some Basswood he had bought, and wondered if the firewood would last the winter.

Church and friends

The next Sunday, it was a struggle to get to Church. The snow lay deep, and Jonas broke trail for the rest of the family until finally they joined the path made by others who had ridden their horses or drawn a sleigh down to the schoolhouse serving as a church. It was warm inside as they
sang their old Lutheran hymns, mostly in Swedish, but they also tried to learn a few new songs in English. John Magnus Peterson led the worship service, his wife led the singing. The pastor from Norsesland, ten miles to the East, did not try to get there through the snow. They prayed for the families on outlying farms, and for their deliverance from the storm. After the service, they all stood around and talked about the storm and shared their experiences. Finally, they said their good-byes and headed back the long walk to their farms, a little easier going through the now trodden snow.

The new baby
On March 21, little Otto William was born in the middle of the night and without any complications. Jonas had made a cradle out of pine boards, and the baby spent most of his time rocking near the stove. He was given even more attention than usual, because two babies had died after Ephraim was born, and he was considered a special gift. The first natural born American in the family! A neighbor had brought some milk when she heard of the new arrival, and Stina made Otto a sugar-teat out of a rag and string to keep him occupied between breast feedings. The winter had been cold, but the family could begin to think of spring coming. In a few weeks they would begin to see migrating birds heading north with the spring thaw. In two more months it would be time to plant again, and Jonas was already beginning to make plans with his neighbors to share in the plowing.

The Farmhouse
I looked more closely at the old farmhouse, now sagging and in disrepair. Typically, it would have been built a few years after the settlers arrived and when money had been earned from the sale of several years' wheat crops. The dugout sod house had certainly served them well, but was damp, crowded, and difficult to keep warm and to keep clean. Their house in Sweden, although small, had been neat as a pin and the family longed for a real house with wood floors and glass windows, a stove, and a chimney. With money from several good harvests in his purse, it was now time to think of building a proper house.

I thought about our recent adventures building our own vacation home on a lake in Northern Minnesota. It was to be a family project, built with the aid of two hired carpenters guiding the work according to plans drawn and designed by me. My four sons, now grown, all pitched in to help along with some of their spouses. We had to face many of the challenges Jonas and Stina did and know how they must have felt as the work progressed. While they had the dugout to live in, we stayed in a travel trailer borrowed for a few weeks, plus our family camp trailer. I had the benefit of electricity, which Jonas's farm was not to have for at least 80 years or more. But for both of us, there was a lot of making do and improvisation until the house was far enough along to move inside. Meanwhile, for Jonas, farm work had to continue.

Jonas no doubt hired a carpenter but also pitched in himself, and sons Lars and Ephraim were now old enough to help with the work. Stina and the girls kept everyone fed and supplied cold water from the well for the men working in the summer heat. Wagon loads of lumber and supplies had to be brought to the farm, most likely from St. Peter, and a forgotten item was sorely missed. There was no hardware store or Home Depot close by. All work was done with a hammer, saw, and a few other hand tools owned by the carpenter. First the foundation had to be dug and foundation walls built, then the first floor could be put down and the framing of the walls could begin. Little Otto William watched it all in wonder as he toddled about, his older sister Mathilda probably being assigned to keep him out from underfoot. Long hours of hard work to take advantage of the warm summer days interrupted only by a break for dinner at noontime and a late supper.

I wondered if when the last roof rafter was in place did they pause for the old Scandinavian custom of putting a small evergreen tree at the top of the house, to bring good luck, the taklagsfest? I know we did when we topped out the last beam at "Myggebacke," our vacation home, in 1992. We passed cold beers around; did the Jansson family celebrate with a special treat for dinner? Perhaps a chicken from their growing flock? Work quickly resumed with the installation of siding, floor...
ing, and a roof to keep the weather out. A mason had to be brought in to lay a brick chimney for the stove, a cast-iron stove to cook on and to heat the entire house with warmth from the kitchen. Sawdust was used to fill the spaces in the outside walls and hold the heat in the winter. Then plasterers did all the inside walls and partitions, so that the carpenter could install the new windows and doors. The windows and doors had to have simple wood trim applied, then the walls were ready for wallpaper, patterns carefully picked out in town by Stina.

The Design
The design of the first stage of the new house was very similar to the simple Swedish cottages of the period. There were two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs, with a stair near the center. There was a porch in the front, possibly open at first like all Swedish porches, but later closed in against the bitter cold Minnesota winters. But there were some differences brought about by different customs in America. Narrow ship lap siding painted white was most common, rather than the board and batten vertical siding, or sometimes painted stucco found in Sweden. Swedish houses were most often the dark “Swedish Red,” often used for barns in the U.S. because this was the cheapest paint. Or sometimes stucco was painted in pastel ochre, blue, or yellow if the owners were a little more affluent. Typically Swedish casement windows gave way to double hung windows in the U.S., already being massproduced in factories in Chicago or Minneapolis.

The kitchen was where most time was spent, much of it occupied with food preparation and because it was warmest around the stove in the winter. The other rooms got what heat they could through the doorways and rising up the stair to the second floor. The other downstairs room, two windows facing the front, was probably Jonas and Stina’s bedroom at first, with the boys sharing one upstairs room and the girls sharing the other. Small rooms had attic eaves on either side and a window at the end. Little Otto most likely slept in his mother and father’s bedroom, in a crib. On cold winter mornings, everyone came to the kitchen to get dressed in the warmth of the stove fed by kindling and corn cobs. A cold trip to the outhouse, also supplied with corn cobs, was a morning ritual, followed by a big breakfast in the kitchen. Bathing was infrequent, water had to be heated on the stove and a washtub on the kitchen floor allowed little privacy. Stina and the girls had to wash their hair regularly, however, together with a Saturday night bath to look their best at church on Sunday morning.

Barely 500 square feet (45 sq. meters), the house was crowded for a family of five children, several of whom were grown or nearly so. It is likely that within a few years the addition to the house was decided on to make more room. It was a time when needs were great, but a good crop would bring cash.

The yield in wheat was about 20 bushels per acre in those years, and there was a ready market in St. Peter for barges of wheat to go down the Minnesota River to Minneapolis/St. Paul. Flour mills there would mill the wheat into flour to feed a growing and hungry nation. But Jonas and Stina also needed their own team of horses for farm work, plows, harrows, and other implements of their own, and a wagon to get to town now and then. Chickens provided eggs and meat for the table, but a fine cow or two would add milk, butter, and cheese to vary the fare. And they needed a barn to keep the horses and cow in. All required money.

The addition to the farmhouse was to the rear, or west side. They added two new rooms downstairs, and over these two rooms, another bedroom upstairs. They built a new chimney for another stove in the new parlor, facing the road, and a room rarely used except when company came to visit. They also added a separate living room downstairs where the kitchen was, and a better kitchen at the rear. The house was now up to
nearly a thousand square feet (90 sq. meters), and allowed the family to spread out in more luxury. (Today, new houses average 2,000 to 2,500 square feet in typical moderate income neighborhoods, with “Executive Homes” likely to be 3,500 to 5,000 square feet.) There was still no inside bathroom or plumbing; that was to be added many years later. The well was down near the barn, and the outhouse remained about 30 steps in back of the house.

The Wedding
Later in 1866, the same year that Jonas and Stina began their farm, a new neighbor settled across the road. A young man from Sweden, Carl (Charles) Hed arrived with his family in November of that year, and soon became acquainted with the Jansson family. He was 18 years old, and no doubt caught the eye of Wilhelmina, 16, and Mathilda, now 14. It was not until January 31 of 1873, only a few months after the new church was completed, that Charles, now 24, and Mathilda, 20, were married. This was the same January that had brought one of the worst blizzards ever experienced by the new settlers.

The wedding of Charles Hed and Mathilda Jansson was possibly one of the first weddings to take place in the brand-new, but still incomplete church, and all the neighbors gathered on that cold winter day to celebrate this marriage. The first wedding for the Janssons, Jonas no doubt felt as all fathers do when giving away their daughters in marriage, both proud and a little sad to see their little girl now grown up. She was to be close by, however, living just across the road from her family. Mathilda and Charles were to farm near both their parents all their lives, raise 11 children, and later would care for Jonas and Stina when they became too old to continue with the farm work.

The Hed family had lived in a dugout house for 3 years until they, too, were able to build a house in 1869. By 1870, Charles’ father, Johan-

nes (John) Hed, had 2 horses, 7 cows, 4 oxen, 5 head of cattle, and 2 pigs. That year, with his son’s help, John had planted 30 acres of spring wheat, Indian corn, oats, and barley. Mathilda moved into the Hed family house with Charles after their marriage, and some years later Charles bought his own land nearby. He later became one of the first farmers in the area to own a newly invented threshing machine, and hired it out to other farmers for miles around at harvest time.

My wife tapped the horn in the motor home to indicate lunch was ready. I snapped the last few photos on my roll of film, and walked out the farm road to join her for a sandwich and cup of tea. I had to step over a rusty harrow that the current owner had placed in the road to keep out the cars of local teenagers, who found the old homestead a place to party and vandalize. How would today’s young people have fared in the pioneer life, I wondered, having grown up in a different world? A world of dawn-to-dark constant work from an early age, little chance to roam, no radio, no TV, no rock music, no ready access to beer and more harmful substances, no air conditioning, never a restaurant meal, and little variety in their food. I sat down in the dinette and began to eat my sandwich with a few potato chips and a cold glass of pop (soda), gazing around at the countryside. There was not a soul in sight; one car passed by in the entire time we were there.

Troubles
Despite hard work and slow improvements at the farm, life was a struggle for the new settlers. Some no doubt looked back with longing to their homes in Sweden, others only remembered the poverty, the hunger, and the hopelessness of a life with little opportunity and too many people on not enough land. Most had little desire to return home, their struggle and their opportunity was here on the Minnesota prairie.

Jonas became a naturalized citizen on November 21, 1871, renouncing his allegiance to the King of Norway and Sweden in favor of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America. In this paper, he signed “Jonas Jansson,” but the clerk of court of Nicollet County wrote the name as Jonas Johnson. From that time, the family name was now Johnson.

A Growing Community
The new Lutheran Church was finally fully completed in June, 1873, including all the interior decorative woodwork and new wooden pews. At Mathilda’s wedding in January, it had still been bare and makeshift, with temporary benches. She had been married by the new pastor, Swedish-born Mr. C.M. Ryden, 48 years old, and called by the church in June, 1871, even though he had just finished seminary. Assisted by his wife, he led services for a time in the schoolhouse until the church was ready.

(to be continued)
Jag lever och har hälsan: A Conference on Letters and Diaries of Swedish Immigrants in North America

The great majority of the 1.3 million Swedish immigrants who settled in North America between 1840 and 1930 were literate. For this group the act of writing was important, and over the years hundreds of thousands of letters were sent from immigrants in America to friends and family in Sweden. The so-called "America letter" became a regular feature of Swedish life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it played a highly significant role in creating an awareness of America in Sweden and in assisting and promoting Swedish emigration to America. In 1883, the growing trans-Atlantic correspondence was noted by one Swedish observer, who said that "Thousands, millions of such letters fall like flakes from a snow cloud over the entire land from Skåne to Lapland."

Letters did not only cross the Atlantic in one direction. Significant numbers of letters were sent from Sweden to North America as well, and became highly important in the process through which Swedish immigrants maintained ties with their ancestral country and culture. Scholars have long recognized the importance of immigrant letters, and several collections have been already published. In addition, several archives on both sides of the Atlantic have systematically collected immigrant letters.

This conference, Jag lever och har hälsan (I am alive and well), will examine Swedish immigrant letters from a variety of perspectives, with some comparisons to Norwegian letters. It will discuss what the letters tell us about social, religious, political and cultural dimensions of Swedish immigrant life in North America. It will also address ways in which the immigrants related to events in both the new and the old countries, as well as ways in which they served to maintain contacts with friends and family on both sides of the Atlantic.

Persons successful in their new lives may have been more likely to write home and share their experiences with friends and family than those who were unsuccessful. We should thus ask ourselves not only what the letters talk about but also what they do not talk about. A related question is what the immigrants were most likely – or least likely – to write home about. The peak experience for most emigrants was unquestionably the Great Journey to the new land, for which reason we still have any number of detailed descriptions of the departure from home, the Atlantic crossing, and the arrival at American destinations. Thereafter, immigrants normally wrote home most often during their earlier years of adjustment to new conditions and during the period of greatest nostalgia for home.

The thousands of letters have helped us gain a deeper understanding of the Swedish immigrant experience. Through them we can learn about many aspects of the lives that the immigrants lived, and of their hopes, aspirations, and disappointments. Please join us for a conference which will explore a central and exciting dimension of Swedish-American history!

Conference Schedule at Augustana College Campus

Friday, October 15
7:30 p.m.
Keynote address and 2004 O. Fritiof Ander Lecture, Werner Sollors, Harvard University

Saturday, October 16
9:00 a.m.
Orm Øverland, University of Bergen
10:00 a.m.
Jennifer Attebery, Idaho State University
Ulf Jonas Björk, Indiana University
Britt Liljewall, Göteborg University
11:30 a.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m.
Solveig Zempel, St. Olaf College
Joy Lintelman, Concordia College
2:15 p.m.
Eva St. Jean, University of Victoria, Canada
Maria Erling, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg
3:15 p.m. Coffee
3:45 p.m.
Concluding remarks, Byron Nordstrom, Gustavus Adolphus College

Registration Information

There is no registration fee to attend any of the lectures, but pre-registration is requested. Contact us to receive a brochure with registration form. The buffet lunch on Saturday will cost $7.50 per person; reservations are required. If you wish to attend, we request that you send in your reservation and check to the Swenson Center by October 1.
In Memoriam – Phyllis J. Pladsen

Phyllis J. Pladsen, 71, of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, passed away at her home on April 11, 2004, and will be missed by her family and many, many friends both in the U.S. and in Sweden.

Phyllis was devoted to searching for her Swedish roots, and while doing so learnt a lot about Swedish genealogy, and how to do it. She became known for her knowledge and helped many fellow Minnesotans to find their roots in Sweden, both by teaching classes at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis and by freely giving advice.

Phyllis was cofounder and president of the Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota, which grew in numbers during her years. She also was associate editor of the society’s newsletter Tidningen, which is even to be found in some libraries in Sweden.

My own contacts with Phyllis started in 1989, at the NGS Conference in St. Paul, and then we kept in contact, lately more often as e-mail made life easier. I also remember some good meetings with her and her society members at her home. A few years ago she also came to the SAG Workshop in Salt Lake City, but health problems kept her from coming again. Last spring she invited me and my husband for an evening meal during our visit to Minnesota and Wisconsin. It was a good evening and we had many things to discuss. We had hoped to see her and Warren in our home some day, but that is not to be.

In cooperation with Joseph C. Huber, Phyllis compiled the “Swedish Genealogical Dictionary”, now in its 4th edition, which has been a big help to many genealogists. Her children will continue to sell the Dictionary, see the SAG Web site page (p.30).

Donations in her memory can be made to “Friends of ASI Archives and Library,” 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Elisabeth Thorsell

The Swedes in Canada – a worthwhile project

The Swedes in Canada project, which was first mentioned in SAG 2002:1 is progressing according to plan.

The researcher, Elinor Barr, has recently spent time at the Swenson Center in Rock Island to find data in their rich collections about the elusive Swedes. During the summer she is visiting Sweden and doing research at the National Archives (Riksarkivet), The Swedish Emigrant Institute in Växjö, and the Provincial archives at Lund and Göteborg.

The project has now been going on for a couple of years and much material has been collected, but Elinor Barr suspects that much more might be hidden in private homes. She is interested in letters, diaries, obituaries, etc, anything that gives an insight into the lives of the Swedes and how they experienced life in a new land.

More information can be found on the web site of the project: http://www.swedesincanada.ca/

There is also a newsletter that informs on the progress of research and also mentions some of the finds during the research.

Elinor Barr regrets that she is unable to assist people looking for lost relatives in Canada.

The project leader can be reached at

Mrs. Elinor B. Barr
104 Ray Boulevard
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7B 4C4
Canada

E-mail: barr@swedesincanada.ca
The Swedish Archives

2. Arninge Microfiche Center

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

The Arninge Microfiche Research Center is a branch of the Swedish National Archives, and is situated in Täby, just north of Stockholm.

The huge building is also a repository for several paper archives from defunct governmental agencies, but also the consular archives from the Foreign Office (Utrikesdepartementet), and many other interesting documents.

However, for the genealogist it is the microfiche room that is of interest. Here there are copies of all church records for the whole country available up to ca. 1895. There are also documents relating to emigration, like the lists from the Central Bureau of Statistics. Also computers with genealogical CDs are available.

The microfiche reading room has 60 machines, and the entrance is free. However, there is a great interest in using this facility, so readers may sometimes only have the use of a machine for 3½ hours, if others are waiting.

The microfiche are placed in envelopes in huge cabinets, and you are only allowed to look at one envelope at a time. When the staff directs you to a free reader, you will also get a disc with the machine's number. When you take out an envelope, you put your numbered disc in the place of the envelope, which makes it easier to put it back correctly. There are good catalogs to help you find the right fiche. The LDS film numbers are not used in Sweden, so you need to know the time periods you are looking for. There are outlets so you can use your laptop.

There are vending machines for coffee and snacks in the building, and restaurants within walking distance.

The staff is friendly and helpful, and understands English.

Facts:
Mailing & visiting address: Mätslingan 17, 187 66 Täby, Sweden
Phone: +46 8-630 15 00  Fax: +46 8-630 92 33
E-mail: riksarkivet@riksarkivet.ra.se
Web site: http://www.ra.se/indexengelska.html
Opening hours: Mon 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Saturday 9 p.m.-1 a.m. In the summer (June 1 – August 31) the reading rooms close at 4 p.m. Monday - Friday, and remain closed all day Saturdays.
Means of transportation: Bus 629 from underground station Danderyds sjukhus or Mörby Centrum to bus stop Måttbandsvägen in Arninge. Time tables and maps are available through the local public transport company, http://www.sl.se/english/
Swedish American of the Year: Lars Lerup

Every year the two District Lodges in Sweden of the Vasa Order of America, after consultation with the Swedish Foreign Office, elects the Swedish American of the Year. This year Professor Lars Lerup of Houston, Texas, has been elected. Dr. Lerup was born 1940 in Växjö, Sweden, and is an architect and since 1993 Dean of Rice School of Architecture at Rice University in Houston. In 2002 he received an Honorary Doctorship from Lund University in Sweden and has been working on improving the contacts between the Lund Technical College and NASA in Houston, as regards industrial design. Dr. Lerup will probably take part in some of the Swedish American festivities in Sweden during the summer. (The Bridge 2004:1)

Summer Events in Sweden

June 24 Bishop Hill Day, Biskopskulla
July 18 Öland-Amerika Day, Runsten
July 24, John Ericsson Day, Filipstad
Aug. 1 Sweden-America Day, Kalmar
Aug. 8 The Minnesota Day, Växjö

The Göteborg Emigrant Museum

Plans were made to open an Emigrant Museum in Göteborg this summer, but so far it has not materialized.

Swede Finn researcher on the Pacific

Swede Finn researcher K.G. Olin of Jakobstad, Finland, is a prolific writer on the old Swedish-speaking Finlanders and their emigrations. He has so far written 11 books about them, starting with their contributions at New Sweden in Delaware in 1630s onwards. He has written about the period when Alaska belonged to Russia, but was ruled by Finlanders, and much more.

Recently he has started to research the Swede Finns and Finns that ended up in the Coos Bay area of Oregon, starting with a shipwrecked crew in the 1840s. (GenealogyBlog May 20, 2004).

Stockholm City Archives to open again

The Stockholms Stadsarkiv (City Archives) has been closed for rebuilding for about two years. The new facilities were to open again last November, but just a week before they found mold in the offices. So they have spent all winter and spring getting rid of that, and will now open again on 28 June, if everything goes as planned.

New Emigrant CD may be out by New Year

The Sveriges Släktforskarförbund (Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies) and the Swedish Emigrant Institute, Växjö, have recently signed an agreement on working together to make the database Emibas available to the public.

Emibas is a long-time project where volunteers all over Sweden have combined efforts and excerpted emigrants from the clerical surveys and removal records of many parishes. Then they have computerized the data and sent them to Växjö, where they have been added to the main database. This one covers about 1.3 million individuals.

The best thing about Emibas is that it is usually possible to search for a person by parish of birth or date of birth, something that is impossible with the Passenger lists database Emiganten, on the CD Emigranten.

The partners in the project hope that the first version will be ready by 1 January 2005.

A New Index to Some Old Books

A student at Augustana College, but also working for the Swenson Center, Kate Saul, has been doing an Index to the following four books:

Swenskarne i Illinois by Eric Peterson and C.F. Peterson (1880)
The Swedish Element in Rockford, by O.M. Nelson (1940)
Swedish Settlements in Iowa and Western Illinois, by O.M. Nelson (1938)

The link is on the Web site page, p.30.
This half page is from the Death records of Skärdsh parish in Småland, north of the city of Jönköping.

It shows how lucky you can be and find records that tells a little more than just that somebody died.

Now get an ordinary big notebook and start reading and writing as well as you go. If a letter looks like nothing, just leave it, but also leave an open space so you can add it when you have figured out the whole word.

In a Death record you can expect to find the name of the person who died, his or her marital status, the place where he or she lived and how old he or she was. You may also find the cause of death and how long the deceased had been ill. As the medical knowledge was very limited in the old days, the causes of death are mostly guesses, unless there was an accident, or something very obvious, like a death in childbirth.

This page has been cropped in the left-hand margin, so the date you see is the burial date. The actual date of death should be further left.

In the death records for Västerås stift (diocese), which covers the provinces of Dalarna and Västmanland, it often happens that the death records can be very long and tell several details about a person’s life. In those texts, called Personalier (sometimes kept in separate books) you may find names of parents, details about education and service on other farms, marriage and number of children, and finally what hymns the deceased preferred and the last words. Often this text can be very stereotypic, and very seldom mentions any bad things about the deceased, like having been a drunkard or a scolding woman.

You can find a transcription and translation of this text on page 23.
The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society was founded in Biskopskulla, Sweden, May 27th 1989. The society is a friendship organization working to promote interest in Bishop Hill and the history of the Bishop Hill colony. The organization has contacts with the Bishop Hill Heritage Association and the Bishop Hill Old Settlers Society and promotes contacts with Bishop Hill and stimulates interest in this aspect of Swedish emigration history. Today the organization has 388 members. Each year the Swedish Bishop Hill-Society presents “The Olov Isaksson-prize” in remembrance of Prof. Olov Isaksson, an expert and friend of Bishop Hill.

The Bishop Hill-Society also operates the Bishop Hill Museum in Biskopskulla, Sweden (near Enköping, northwest of Stockholm). The museum is open daily during the summer. The rest of the year it’s only opened on request. The holdings of the museum include books about the emigration, photographs, and other historical materials concerning the Bishop Hill Colony. During the year 2003, the museum had about 2,000 visitors. Among the holdings are Erik Janson’s Cateches from 1846, Erik Janson’s Songbook, and we have all issues of George Swank’s Galva News, copies of Anna Lindwall’s letter collection from the early emigrants, and a database of “Old settlers” in Bishop Hill. The museum also includes an exhibition of large photocopies of Olof Krans paintings.

Over the course of years, the Bishop Hill-Society has arranged various chartered tours both within Sweden and over to Bishop Hill, Illinois, in the U.S. The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society visited Bishop Hill in 1996 to celebrate the 150th anniversary with the people of Bishop Hill. In connection with this event, the Bishop Hill-Society presented a gift of two “liars-benches” (ljugarbänkar) to the city of Bishop Hill as a symbol of the friendship between Bishop Hill and Biskopskulla, Sweden.

Over the years the Bishop Hill-Society has hosted several groups from Bishop Hill and other places in the U.S. At some occasions groups have been visiting during the Bishop Hill-Day, an event held each year the day before Midsummer Eve.

The Bishop Hill-Society is involved in various activities during the year including Bishop Hill Day and Seminars. The Bishop Hill-Day event usually draws a large public.

This year (2004) we celebrate the 20th Bishop Hill-Day. A special program with music will be held in the Biskopskulla Church.

The Bishop Hill-Society publishes a newsletter Bulletinen (The Bulletin) twice annually. It contains articles about the history of the Swedish emigration, news from Bishop Hill, etc. In 1996 the Bishop Hill-Society issued a book called Det blaser en vind which contains many interesting articles about Erikjansisterna and Bishop Hill as well as the emigration in general. The articles are all in Swedish.

Address to The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society on the internet: http://home.swipnet.se/bishophill/

Lars-Ove Johansson
My very dear Nils William,

Time goes very quickly these days, and looking for photos of you, I suddenly realized that 15 years have passed since your 80th Birthday reception in Minneapolis. Most of those years have been good, some rather bad for you due to an insubordinate body, but during these years we have had fun.

We have met in Sweden and in many places in the U.S. Our favorite place was Salt Lake City and the library, and I still expect to see you there, with your head well into the reading machine, even though I know it is no longer possible. I remember happy evenings at Mulboons, while the fading evening light slowly wiped out the city below. I remember simple meals of salt herrings in our kitchen. I remember the fantastic pancakes you served me, Bengt, and son Håkan in your home in Florida. I remember many discussions on Swedish customs and how this or that person emigrated. I remember a quiet evening in your home, while Dagmar was playing her music. I remember visiting the church in Upper Merion and the Lower Swedish Cabin with you.

I and all of your friends, both in Sweden and America, have many fond memories of you, and all of us wish you all the best for the future!

Your friend
Elisabeth
The Philadelphia Viking Symposium 2004

In SAG 2004:1 there was a little note on p.22 about the upcoming Viking Symposium, which was arranged by The American Swedish Historical Museum and the Leif Ericson Viking Ship Inc.

The Symposium took place in late April and was a huge success.

The truth about Vikings!
This was what over 160 people came to hear at the April 24 Viking Symposium held in Philadelphia, sponsored by the American Swedish Historical Museum and the Leif Ericson Viking ship Norseman. Seeking to dispel the widely held but faulty image of Vikings in the minds of many people, this event brought together some of the world's leading experts on Vikings to talk about this unique culture of over a thousand years ago.

From the rivers and trade routes of the Middle East to the northern coast of the New World, Vikings from Scandinavia extended their reach and left their influence on modern civilization. The Viking Legacy Symposium at the Independence Seaport Museum on Penn's Landing broadened knowledge about various aspects of the age of Vikings. New and recent discoveries in Viking seafaring, exploration, trade, story telling, systems of justice, and the role of women in Viking society, captured the attention of a diverse audience.

In the morning session, Dr. John Hale of the University of Louisville talked about new research in the evolution and construction of the famous Viking ships, which allowed the Vikings to travel to distant lands, spread their culture, and establish new colonies across Europe and the Atlantic. Navigation far from land, dealing with harsh weather conditions, warfare, and colonization, and engaging in trade all became possible with the advanced technology of these remarkable sailing ships.

Without the strong, able, and independent women of the Viking age to manage their farms, produce the wool textiles for their sails and their seagoing garments, bear and raise their children, and transmit their culture, the achievements of the Vikings would have not been possible. Professor Jenny Jochens of Towson University explored their role in Viking society through examination of their property rights, their economic contributions, and their essential role in maintaining and advancing the knowledge and culture of the Vikings. Her research has been based heavily on runic inscriptions and on the Viking sagas.

After a hearty Viking box lunch enjoyed on the deck of the Seaport Museum overlooking the Delaware River, Professor William Ian Miller, University of Michigan Law School, gave the symposium's keynote address. Dr. Miller spoke animatedly of the means of obtaining justice in a society without written civil or criminal laws, jails, or law enforcement systems. Using mainly an analysis of events as recorded in the Viking sagas dating to the 12th century, he illustrated how getting justice often meant getting even, through a keen sense of evening accounts and balancing hurts in a wise, practical way.

The afternoon session began with a presentation on The Rus, Russia, and the Black Sea by Dan Carlsson, of Gotland University, Visby, Sweden. Dr. Carlson, publisher of Viking Heritage magazine, illustrated the travels of the Vikings, mainly from Sweden, to the rivers of Russia and beyond. Viking chiefs founded the beginnings of the Russian state, settled and developed several major cities, and ruled these eastern lands while their fellow Vikings traveled to the Black Sea, Constantinople, the Mediterranean, and lands in the Middle East. They engaged in trade, served as mercenary soldiers to eastern emperors, and even linked up with trade routes to the Far East.

Did Leif really come?
Vikings in North America was the subject of an illustrated talk by Birgitta Linderoth Wallace, archaeologist with Parks Canada and leading investigator of the World Historic Site discovered in Newfoundland over thirty years ago. Through her research and analysis of the Viking settlement at L'anse Aux Meadows around the year 1000, Dr. Wallace has concluded that this site was the chief base of operations in North America for Leif Ericsson. She presented her theory that "Vinland" was the name for the coastal areas surrounding the Gulf of St. Lawrence, presently parts of Ontario and New Brunswick. These areas fit the descriptions in the two sagas describing the several voyages led by Leif Ericsson and others of his family, with their Greenland and Icelandic crews, to Vinland. The settlement did not become permanent due to the sailing distances involved, the presence of hostile natives, and the lack of an adequate number of people to be spared from the Greenland sett-
A couple of months ago I received an e-mail from SAG reader Paul A. Johnson. It was an answer to my plea in the December SAG that the SAG readers should report news from their areas that would be of interest to everyone.

So what did Paul send me? He sent a link to an article in the Chisago County Press, a newspaper right in Wilhem Moberg land in Chisago County, Minnesota.

The article told about a group of men that have met at the Wagon Wheel Cafe in Chisago City for more than twenty years, for just one purpose: att tala svenska!

They meet every other Tuesday morning and have a nice big breakfast, and talk Swedish all the time to keep their language living. The subjects can be anything and everything. Many of the members in the group still have contacts with their relatives in Sweden and need their Swedish to maintain the contacts. Others have been to Sweden or are planning to go in the future. One member has been there 11 times.

The number of people that meet varies, but usually around 12 or so. Not everyone lives in Chisago, but some drives there from the Twin Cities for these friendly meetings.

The emigrant ancestors of the group came along at different times from the 1860s to 1913 and from different areas of the old country, so the Swedish these men speaks is an older form, than what is used in Sweden these days, which makes the meetings interesting.

Women are also allowed to come, but their number has never been great. The article still gives a feeling that it would be worthwhile to come to Chisago on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, just to listen to all the stories from childhoods in a world long gone.

There are probably many little groups like this one, that does a grassroot type of work to preserve the Swedish heritage. I have had the privilege of visiting with the Swedish Class at the Ishpeming Evangelical Covenant Church in the Michigan Upper Peninsula, and they did a super job of keeping the Swedish alive.

Do keep me posted on these Swedish groups that works to keep the heritage alive.

Elisabeth Thorsell
Great-grandmother’s Strange Name Change

Persistence pays off!

By Edith E. Anderson

From the time I was first aware of the name by which my great-grandmother (mormors mor) was called, I have been fascinated with her “Tyre.” The name fell lightly from the tip of my mother’s tongue. Her full name was Tyre Nilsdotter.

Born in southern Sweden, mormors mor had died in Chicago when my mother was seven; and my mormor had died before I was born, so I had not known either of them. But Mother’s frequent references to aspects of their lives were windows into which I peeked from time to time.

Contacts with Sweden

Tyre had had many children, creating a generous assortment of relatives whose letters and members comfortably entered our home at regular intervals. Some of those letters came from Sweden, pasted with distinctive stamps and bringing sweet pressed flowers and intricately crocheted doilies. A portrait of an elderly couple connected them all. It had been made in Helsingborg. It showed Tyre with her husband, whose death in Sweden had preceded her making the transatlantic journey to join her Swedish-American sons and daughters for her final years. There were no windows into the details of that voyage. There was only the knowledge that one of Tyre’s children had provided us with Scanian relatives.

Early notes

When in my teen years, I jotted down a brief outline of these various relatives. Many years later I attempted to flesh out the outline, with the help of some essential details collected and left behind by my mother after her 1978 death. Included was the key to my own research — a copy of my mormors baptismal certificate (dop-attest) from Vedby parish (Kristianstad län). It had been provided by a Pastor C.L. Malmberg, pastor of Vedby’s mother church at Klippan in 1957. My own research was to be given the same kind and generous help he had provided to my mother by way of their correspondence in the Swedish language. It was from Ulla Lars­son, clerk of the Klippan church, that my help began coming — in English, thankfully — in 1995.

What’s In a Name?

I was to learn that Tyre Nilsdotter’s name had undergone many changes over the years. Who knows what thinking and social practices effected those changes? Her marriage to Per Knutsson in 1854, in Flenninge parish (Malmohus län), was not one of them. The Swedish practice then was one which retained a woman’s maiden name after marriage, hers coming from the patronymic of Nils Pahlsson, 1802-1861. From her birth in Strövelstorp parish (Kristianstad län) on the last day of 1831 through the birth of her eighth child in 1870, she kept the same name. Then, suddenly, with the birth of son Nils in 1872, she became Tyre “Nilsson”, and continued with that name through the births of two more children. In Chicago her name was listed on her own death record, February 5, 1907, as “Tyra Knutson” and on the Illinois death certificates of four of her children her maiden name had become “Nelson.”

Everyone who has done genealogy research of Swedish immigrants to America knows how important it is to know the name used by the individual in Sweden. Otherwise it can become difficult, if not impossible, to locate the individual in Swedish records. My problem was the opposite — that of locating American records in the face of an uncertain name change. In this family were so many name changes, of both first and last name, with siblings choosing from among no fewer than four different surnames even before marriage, that I expected anything could be possible.

Eventually I had gotten a copy of Tyre’s death certificate, but only after the custodian of the vital records had notified me that a diligent search could not find it. (It paid to be persistent; and it helped that I had first found her name listed in a Chicago death index.)
Searching for the Details

Now I searched for details of the trip that brought Tyre to Chicago. In the Vedby parish household rolls (husförhörsängd) I found the likely date mormors mor was given permission to leave her Vedby parish – January 23, 1901. But I found neither emigration nor immigration records for her.

Tyre’s married daughter Botilla (Persdotter), the last of her living children still in Sweden, lived 30 miles away in Helsingborg. Botilla and her husband, Johannes Persson Sandström, had four children, the younger ones being Knut Viktor and Lilly Walborg. Lilly Walborg’s grandson in Sweden had written to me in the 1980s that his grandmother had once been in America “in her youth.” I began to wonder whether Botilla and Lilly Walborg could have accompanied Tyre on her long journey?

Indeed, I located all four of these family members in the 1901 Malmöhus (an utflyttade (emigranter) records under the name “Johan Sandström.” Since Tyre’s name was not listed with them, and lacking a more exact date for their departure from Helsingborg, I wrote to Skåne’s provincial archives, Landsarkivet i Lund, for help. From there I was referred to the Maria church parish office (Maria församlings pastorsämbete) in Helsingborg. It was there that the 1901 city parish household rolls (Helsingborg’s stadsförsamling husförhörsängd) still were housed.

In a little over six weeks a letter arrived from Maria församling with answers to my questions. I was informed that these four family members – Johannes, Botilla, Knut Viktor, and Lilly Walborg – had moved to the U.S.A. in July of 1901; and I eventually found them all in the August 1901 Ellis Island immigration records under the name “Johannes Persson Sandstrom.” They had come aboard the Germanic, from Liverpool. I was disappointed to find that Tyre was not with them. So much for my theory that Botilla was her mother’s traveling companion to America!

The letter from Helsingborg’s Maria församling had contained another piece of information that interested me very much, however: Botilla’s two older children had both “moved to U.S.A.” ahead of their parents. The younger of the two, a daughter, had gone in August of 1899. The elder, a 19 year-old son named Thure Ferdinand, “moved to USA 30 January 1901.” This was Tyre’s oldest grandson, living at the time in Helsingborg’s stadsförsamling.

Ulla Larsson, from the Klippan church, agreed with me that it was reasonable to assume Tyre and Botilla’s older son had left Sweden in early February and that the others had gone later that year, after school was out for the younger children. (Botilla and her tailor husband and younger children later moved back to Sweden after only a few short years in Chicago. She was the only one of Tyre’s children to remigrate.)

Asking the Right Question

Now I concentrated on Tyre and her 19 year-old grandson Thure Ferdinand in CD-Emigranten and the Ellis Island Internet records (<www.ellisislandrecords.org>). Not knowing what surname either of them might be using, I entered into my search every possible name combination and spelling variation I could think of; but I continued to draw a blank in both databases. I searched for every 69 year old in CD-Emigranten for 1900-1903. Nothing. I felt sure that were I to find one of the pair I would find the other. By what surname had Thure Ferdinand gone, I wondered. Johanneson? Johansson? Sandström?

In early February of 2004, I decided to look for every person surname “Sand-” arriving at Ellis Island in 1901. There were some 380 of them. None of the given names beginning with “T-” was the individual for whom I was looking; but just above them, on the same page, the name “Sure Sandstrom,” a 19-year-old with residence of Sweden, caught my eye. When I clicked on it I found a male arriving from Southampton on February 21.

Whoa!

Turning to the original ship manifest, I was elated to read on line 8: “Ture Sandström,” and immediately below him, “Tyre Knutsson,” age 69, a widow headed for Chicago. Several years’ worth of research had resulted in the shipping records finally giving up that lovely name!

Swedish American Genealogist 2004:2
They had come on the *Vaderland*, a new British steamship accommodating nearly 1,200 passengers. Tyre and her grandson, like some 600 others, were traveling in third class (steerage) on the 13-day voyage from England. Moreover, they apparently were traveling in the company of Tyre’s married daughter Ingar “Emma” Palmen1, already a U.S. citizen of several years.

How had I not found Tyre in my many earlier attempts to do so since the Ellis Island records had first come on line? I clicked on the “text version manifest,” the typed record for that page. There was the obvious answer: Not only had Tyre been listed as a male, with a surname ending in “-ssen,” but she, also, had been entered into the transcribed database with the given name of “Sure.” “Sure Knutssen,” 69 year-old male. Would you have recognized her?

Had I been more creative with my entering of information into the database query, I probably could have come up with Tyre sooner. As it was, I never did go to the option of searching the ship manifests, line by line, for ships arriving at New York from European ports during February of 1901. It was by this method that I had found my mormor in the manifests some years earlier — a tedious job! Had I used this method for mormors mor, however, I would likely have recognized her name in the clear, handwritten manifest pages of *Vaderland*. Short of that, I could hardly have been certain I had the right person without the accompanying identifiers for her grandson/traveling companion. My thorough searches through the various household rolls (husförhörslängd) listing Tyre and her children while they remained in Sweden had paid off.

I still have not located Tyre and Thure Ferdinand in the Swedish police records or Danish emigration records, so I don’t know how they got from Sweden to England’s southern coast. Tyre’s children began leaving Sweden by way of Copenhagen in 1883; and although I have not yet located all of their emigration/immigration records, either, it would not be a surprise to learn that she followed their travel route. I remain open to other possible ports of emigration for my name-changing mormors mor, as well.

**Note:**
1. The presence of Emma’s name on the manifest came as a complete surprise to me. Although the Chicago address listed there for her is not corroborated by other family documents, the names of these three passengers have been grouped together on the record; so this Emma is unlikely to be someone not connected with Tyre and Thure. Unlike others of her sisters, Emma did not have young children at home, and would have been in this wise unencumbered from making the journey to Sweden and back with Tyre. As a seasoned traveler and a cautious Swede, Emma might have thought it unwise to reveal one’s correct address for the manifest record. Another reason for believing this Emma to be Tyre’s daughter is a notation which gradually emerged from line 9 as I studied the handwriting on the manifest page. It was the word “senility.” I never had heard this — or anything like it — spoken in regard to Tyre. Somehow, it seemed much different from the phrase “old age” written on her death certificate. However, if after raising eleven children under adverse conditions she had become too forgetful to undertake this long journey with only a young grandson to accompany her, she probably would have earned that privilege!

Emma and her husband, Edward Palmen, were to make another visit to Sweden, in 1907 — a fact which, curiously, resulted in my meeting up with a previously unknown cousin north of Helsingborg some 90 years later. But that is another story.

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The Skärstad Death Records

Transcription

Döde och begravne, årh 1743.


Dec. 4 H. Marit Olufsdr Måns Åkessons hustru i Botarp. Som något öfwer the 7 sidsta åhren warit sängliggande, och mest klagade sig öf r owanligt sus och buller i hufwudet. Somt the sidsta 3 åhren brukat Medewi Surbrunn. Sidst till-slog en smärtefull swullnad i 7 wekors tid. 57 [år]

" 4 Gamla Pigan Elisabet Jönsdr ifrå Lekeryd Sochn, som en rund tid här i församlingen tient, och sidan wid pass 7 årh merendels warit sängliggande af brötsiuka, hwar til sidst slog durchlopp. Äldern o bekandt.

Translation

Dead and buried, (the) year 1743

[Nov]emb 13 Little boy Jon, Håkan Persson's son. Healthy his first year, the 2nd poorly, and the third again healthy. Lately 13 days of diarrhoea 3 [year]

Dec. 4 Goodwife Marit Olufsdotter, Måns Åkesson's wife of Botarp. Who somewhat more than the last 7 years had been bedridden, and mostly complained about unusual noise and din in her head. Had for the last 3 years used the Medevi Spa. Lately there was a painful sawelling for 7 weeks time. 57 [year]

" 4 Old maid Elisabet Jönsdotter fromLekeryd parish, who for a long time has been serving in this parish, and since about 7 years been bedridden from chest illness, to which was at last added diarrhoea. Her age was not known.

The script of this page is a very good example of the Gothic or German script (tyska stilen), which was used from the end of the 1600s until the early 1800s, when the clergymen most often changed to the Latin script.

The German script is a bit difficult, but by training it is possible to read it. One just has to remember that the letters does look a bit different.

What looks like a "4" is most often an "r", and the long letter "s", which also has many short varieties, can be an "f". Many curves up and down usually means an assortment of "m" and "n".

Try this by writing "kammereraren" in your own hand and see if you can make out the individual letters. This man was an accountant. Double "m" can sometimes be written as a single letter with a ~ on top of it; when transcribing, do the double "mm", otherwise it might be difficult to find the word in your dictionary.

The vowel "u" mostly also has a ~ on top, to make it clear that there is a vowel there. It can be hard to see in the mass of other letters, all looking just the same.

When you are reading old script, don't hurry, take your time and make sure you have got everything right, especially the names. Otherwise you may end up with the wrong ancestors or places.

The maid above came from Lekeryd parish, which is close to Skärstad. But further south in Småland there is Lekaryd parish, and careless reading might take you to the wrong place.
The Örberga Poorhouse
– A Woman’s Work

BY GERDA TELL

TRANSLATED BY ANN LITTLE

The Old Peoples Home (Fattigstugan) in Örberga, Östergötland, has long since been demolished, but I have many memories from there, which I will try to relate here.

In the New Year period of 1899, my mother, walking with heavy and tired footsteps, was on her way to see the chairman of our Parish Council, who had sent for her. She had been offered the position of matron at Örberga “poorhouse,” as it was called in those days.

My father, worn down by pain, and suffering quite badly with his nerves, was unable to support his family singlehandedly. He was employed as a stallforman and coachman at Arneberga gård (manor farm). Mother helped in the fields at harvest time, and had to take the children along with her; she worked so very hard.

On the day in question, my mother felt very down, something she would often tell us children about. I was not yet born then, but she was carrying a little one next to her heart, who would be born in May of that year. It is not surprising then that her walk was heavy and her mind troubled at the thought of having to care for a lot of feeble old people.

Mr. Hägerström, the local minister, and his wife thought that Mother was well suited to work with the old, and had told her so on many previous occasions.

And so, Mother took the job; she felt that she had no other option, as she would often say to us. She was strong and healthy, and had a good temperament. I cannot recall Mother being ill for more than one day when we were young.

We lived in a large, oblong shaped room, with an iron stove and panelling on the walls. In my memory it all seems so dark, but there were “points of light.” Mother was lucky with flowers and the potted plants in the windows, and we had beautiful curtains.

There was one window facing north, and another facing south, but no electric lights at that time; only kerosene lamps, which did not light up such a large room very well.

The Old People

Everybody, young and old, would enter the house through a wooden veranda. Opposite the front door was the kitchen, where there lived three old men; they had an open fireplace, where they would put their tripod legged coffeepots when they made their coffee. There was also a large baking oven in the kitchen, with enough room for 16 loaves to be baked at the same time. Mother would bake for the old people as well as for us.

It was not always easy to keep check on their small individual bags of flour, and some of the people seemed to suspect “foul play,” but mostly they trusted “Mor Stava” (mother Stava) as they used to call her.

To the right of the front door, a long passage led to our one room. To the left was stora stugan; the main room. There lived eight old women and their beds were put close together along the walls. If you went in when they were making coffee, you would see the top of their stove covered with coffeepots. They had to do their own housekeeping. Communal meals, paid for by the parish, did not exist in those days. – Oh no, the few ‘pennies’ they received in parish re-
lief was not even enough for one square meal a month. One month they received 1.65 kronor and the next 1.50 kronor, and then, as payment in kind, a small amount of flour and a few potatoes, once every three months.

Above the stora stugan (the main room) lay a järnspiselrum (iron stove room). There lived two mothers with their five children. They were not too well off either, poor things, but they seemed content nevertheless.

What joy there was at Christmas time amongst both young and old when the coachman arrived from Naddö (a manor in the parish), with "provisions" from Mrs. von Heidenstam, who always remembered us children. There would be baskets packed with nice things; sweets for the children and sugar, coffee, and rice for the old people, as well as for our family.

In the summertime, we children were allowed to pick lots of fruit at Naddö. Such kindness is never forgotten.

On Christmas Eve, Mrs. Margretha Ohlsson at Ullevi Västergard sent a delivery of coffee, sugar, and bags of rice, as well as the finest bread.

Mother would cook rice porridge for everybody in the home on Christmas Eve, and coffee on Christmas Day.

Supplies came from Arneberga gård too; a large tub of milk, which Mother would share out between the old people. This meant that they did not have to touch their own scant money to buy milk for a long while (milk cost 8 öre per liter in those days). A lot of other things arrived from Arneberga, however, we children did not "get a look in"; Mother would carry everything indoors for the old people; they took priority, which was only right. Mother knew where her responsibility lay.

Ways of earning money
A lot of the old people earned extra money by lacemaking and knitting socks (there was even an old man who made lace). The women who knitted for bondhåramororna—the farmers' wives—preferred to be paid "in kind," and the farmers wives would give them pieces of pork, loaves of bread, and new potatoes, if it was that time of the year.

There were some people who received help from their children—even from America—and then, their lined old faces would light up in joy.

What we ate
How well I remember Thursdays' yellow pea soup, when the old people would bring their pieces of pork to Mother, tied around with bits of thread for the purpose of identification; there was even red-colored thread. Not very hygienic perhaps, but nobody worried about such things in those days. Everything tasted good. Mother was a marvelous cook and could make a tasty meal out of very little.

On Saturdays, we always had mashed rutabagas, and on Tuesdays, we had soup.

Mother always shared with others of what she had. Her motto was; "a closed fist can receive nothing." True words. However, when I was very young, before I started school, Mother did not have much to share. I remember well how we would often eat vattgröt (porridge made from rye flour) for our evening meal, with milk or syrup-water; bread and pickled herring and raw onion. It tasted wonderful when you were hungry. Perhaps it lacked something in the way of vitamins, but we were healthy, nevertheless.

As time went by, we would sometimes have meatballs on Sundays, and for dessert soup made from dried fruit. Mother would halve the meatballs for us children, and share them out between us. What a feast!

We could eat as many potatoes as we could manage; we grew our potatoes on land belonging to Mr. Dahlgren, the tenant of the Komminister gård in Örberg. He was always very kind to Mother, who kept a pig in Mr. Dahlgren's pigsty. We did not have any outbuildings, only a cellar which was built after I began school.
The pig
In early spring, Mother would make her way to August Karlsson, the owner of Säby Södergård. She would bring a sack along for the pig she was buying, and then carry it home on her back.

One year, Mother did not have enough money for a pig, and we were all very sad. But then one day, twenty kronor arrived in the post from one of my brothers, who was living in the town of Enköping, where he was training to be a gardener.

We felt really happy, as the amount was exactly the price of a pig; they were quite cheap in those days.

Mother shared everything with the old people in the house, making sure that they got more than just the “cooking-smells.”

Modern times are coming
In 1916, “the year of the light” arrived in Orberga old village. That was thanks to our Prince Eugen, who brought electricity to his newly built manor of Örgården, and to Orberga village.

By then, the “poorhouse” had seen a few changes too; our home had been made much brighter. Our one, long room, had been made into two rooms; one large and one small. Also, there was now a doorway into the kitchen and a kakelugn (tiled oven), in the large room.

There were two old men living in the kitchen at that time; later there would be only one. (After 1930 there were no old people in the kitchen.)

The room in which the old women lived had become so much brighter as well, with light colored ceiling and beautiful wallpaper on the walls. The children were all grown up by then, and had left home; all except me.

There were still bedridden people in the home; people who had been lying in bed for years, and Mother had to look after them. But now she had better pay; 100 kronor a year, instead of 50 kronor a year, as in the past.

Other income
Mother also had other sources of income; she did not get any money for looking after the mail and newspapers for the villagers, but she would be paid by different means.

Also, she would hand over peoples’ mail to the postman when he was on his way back from the Näsja round in the afternoon.

The telephone exchange was put in our house on 23rd November, 1905, after the big fire in Orberga. It did not pay much, but the pay increased with the years as did the number of subscribers. I think that each subscriber paid 20 kronor a year, before 1936, when the telephone exchange became automated. By then, Mother had run the telephone exchange for 31 years, coupled with all her other duties.

Mother also had the responsibility of heating the village school and the parish council room. It was generally us children who did the cleaning; Mother saw to the dusting and heating. I can picture her in my mind still carrying the heavy boxes of coal for the fires in winter.

The bellringer
Another of my Mother’s duties was, for many years, to ring the Örberga church bell every weekday at 6 o’clock in the morning and at 6 o’clock in the evening, from the 1st of April to the 1st of October. For this she was paid 5 kronor at the end of the six months. I know she had a pile of stones in a corner of the church porch during the summer. When she pulled at the thick bell rope hanging from the roof space, she would kick away a stone with each peal of the bell, so as not to lose count.

Mother was quite strict with us children, but fair, and we all loved her very much.

I remember her saying to me once, when I was a bit older, “there are probably many who are jealous of me.” But now, in hindsight, it doesn’t seem much to be jealous of, the way Mother had to work so hard for paltry wages.

Other duties
The parish stables were situated on the west side of the church wall. There, in a stall, were black coffins for the poor, stacked one on top of the other. Mother would collect a coffin from there when a person died. She would make the deceased look so nice; put flowers in their hands, if it was summertime; otherwise she would use a bit of greenery from her potted plants. Some of those who died had no next of kin; then Mother would always walk with them to the graveside.

Many schoolchildren would bring their little troubles to “Moster Stava” (Auntie Stava) as they would call her. Sometimes they had damaged their clothes, and sometimes they had “damaged” themselves.

She would also go to people’s houses to lay out their dead. How she found the time and strength to cope with everything is a mystery. Mother always put her trust in a “higher power,” and was content with her lot.

Also, Mother was remarkably fit and healthy. Now, in the year 1920, her wages had been increased to 150 kronor a year, so things were a lot better than they used to be.

The memories come and they go; how well I remember the day I came home from school to discover that Mother had found 90 kronor in a pile of dirty shirts she was sorting through, after an old man that had recently died. She immediately took the money to the “parish room,” where a meeting was taking place that day. She received no reward but; “a clean conscience is worth more than money.”

When Dalsgården, the new Old People’s Home stood ready in 1931, there was only one “old age pensioner” left to move from Orberga.

Mother fell asleep on the 6th of September, 1946. Her memory lives on in us her children for as long as we ourselves are alive.

[Editor’s note: This is a translation from a newspaper in the Linköping area, probably the Östgöta Correspondenten in the late 1940s. The translator, Ann Little, is a great-grandchild of "Mör Stava" and lives in Cornwall, England. Her e-mail is Annantelan@aol.com]
Correction
Lilly Setterdahl’s book about Swedes in Moline has a price tag of $25.95.

What Is It to Be a Swede?


This volume is a collection of research papers by five scholars at Umeå University in Sweden, edited by Daniel Lindmark, Associate Professor of History. Two of the five are doctoral Students, the other three, including Dr. Lindmark, are faculty members at the University in the Department of Historical Studies. Each paper addresses a particular aspect of Swedish migration to the U.S. or, in one paper, to Canada. As with most research papers, they are written in the academic style and are thoroughly documented with a detailed list of sources, intended more for the scholar than for light reading.


This essay looks at patterns of church activity among descendants of New Sweden colonists in the 17th and 18th centuries. How the religious needs of these colonial Swedes were met, interchurch cooperation with Anglican congregations, religious commitment measured by communion frequency, and confessional attitudes during this time period are all examined. Members of Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington, DE, and of the Wicaco congregation (Old Swedes) in Philadelphia are the principal subjects of the study.


Dr. Kvist has concentrated his study on the political/religious beliefs of early Swedish immigrants before and during our Civil War (ca. 1840-1870). His principal thesis is that Swedish Lutheran Pietism in these new citizens was strongly influenced both by their homeland beliefs, and by contact with Yankee Protestants. This, together with the strong influence of their religious leaders such as T. N. Hasselquist, caused the majority to give their allegiance to the Republican Party in the political realignment which was occurring during that period. While the earliest immigrants were inclined to the Democratic Party, their allegiance underwent a shift as a result of their Pietist perfectionist beliefs and the Republican Party's stand against slavery.

Per Nordahl: Lost and Found - a Place to Be: The organization of provincial societies in Chicago from the 1890's to 1933.

Prof. Nordahl addresses the need for immigrant Swedes in Chicago to maintain images of home and belonging by creating a large number of Swedish provincial societies during this time period. Almost every province from Blekinge to Värmland had its own club or social group, sometimes more than one. The author examines the origins, stated goals, growth, and decline of these clubs, and their role in linking members with the past and preparing them for their new lives in America. The paper identifies 24 of these clubs and includes group photographs of several. Nordahl examines the purposes of the provincial societies, concluding with: "The loss of their old place was resolved by the construction of a new one based on the collective memory of their past". Reviewer's comment: Few American cities had a large enough Swedish population to allow the proliferation of provincial clubs. Chicago was almost unique in that respect, with by far the greatest number of immigrant Swedes of any city during this period.


In this paper, the author draws distinctions between the Swedish immigrant population in Canada, and those in the United States. The Canadian immigrants were predominantly men (about 70%) and most of them were single. The time period was a little later, about 1910 to 1920, and these immigrants came in a time of greater industrialization and more as individuals, not family

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groups or even whole neighborhoods as with the earlier immigrants to the U.S. They were more scattered and less likely to be found living among fellow Swedes. Ms. Rönqvist examined three individual men by means of a number of their letters written home to Sweden over a period of years; men who settled in the Canadian prairie provinces about 1905-1910. She identifies the three as "The Adventurous Conservative, the Hot-tempered Socialist, and The Romantic Settler." Through their letters she analyzes their attitudes about ethnicity and nationalism in Canada.

PER-OLOF GRÖNBERG, "My Kind of Town?" Ethnicity and class as determining factors for return migration or permanent settlement among Swedish engineers in Chicago 1910-1930.

In this study, the author looks at a population of young men trained at various technical schools in Sweden who migrated to Chicago in the first decades of the twentieth century. His method was to look at a population of 158 of 218 Swedish engineers who joined the Swedish Engineers’ Society of Chicago in 1910-1913. (The other 60 could not be tracked, and were deleted from the sample.) He found that of these 158, 65% settled in Chicago, 15% settled elsewhere in the U.S., 2% went to another country, and 18% returned to Sweden. The proportion returning to Sweden was only slightly greater than the general Swedish immigrant population, about 15%. He concludes that most of those who returned saw their time in the U.S. as enhancing their careers in Sweden and/or they had stronger social and family ties to their country of origin. The case for ethnicity or class as determining factors in their return is not strongly made.

These five research papers offer glimpses into particular aspects of the Swedish migration to North America, which are of interest to those wishing a more complete understanding of these immigration patterns. In addition, to this reviewer, they also offer some insight into the attitudes of these contemporary Swedish scholars toward this migration and the people involved.

Dennis L. Johnson

Once Upon a Time in Mpls.

So Far Away in the World, Stories from the Swedish Twin Cities; Anne Gillespie Lewis, Nodin Press, Minneapolis, MN 2002, Soft Cover, 175 Pages, $19.95

Anne Gillespie Lewis grew up in Minneapolis and, after working as a journalist and author, is now a freelance writer. She has a Swedish grandmother and, in addition to writing several books, writes a column for the American-Swedish Institute's newsletter Posten. This book strikes very familiar chords with the reviewer, since I grew up in Minneapolis only ten years or so earlier than Ms. Lewis.

Using primarily personal interviews with the subjects or their descendants, Ms. Lewis writes about several dozen well-known people who lived in Minneapolis who were born in Sweden, or who are descended from these immigrants. Subjects include among the earliest settlers in Minnesota such as Bertha Brunius, who came to St. Anthony Falls (now within the city of Minneapolis) in 1854. Others came later on, such as Inga Svensson who arrived in Minnesota about 1889 and spent much of her adult life as the beloved cook to the family of Governor Alexander Ramsey. The author also included several more recent immigrants who she describes as "world citizens," couples who have alternated between living in Sweden and in Minneapolis.

A number of prominent citizens of Swedish ancestry are also profiled in this book, such as Axel Ohman, builder of many buildings including the landmark Foshay Tower. Axel came as a young lad from Leksand, Dalarna, in 1922. The well-known Youngdahl family, (Ljungdahl, in Sweden), whose ancestors came to the U.S. before 1892 and produced a governor of Minnesota (Luther), the pastor of the largest Lutheran Congregation in the U.S. (Reuben), an author, a congressman, an attorney, a college dean, and others of prominence among their children. (I was confirmed by Reuben Youngdahl in 1945 at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis.)

Gretchen Carlson (Miss America in 1989 and now a CBS News correspondent), former Governor of Minnesota Wendell Anderson, Axel Johnson, saloon keeper, Oscar Danielson, leader of the Oscar Danielson Orchestra, early Pastor Eric Norelius, and basketball star Don Carlson of the Minneapolis Lakers are more examples of the variety of people of Swedish descent Ms. Lewis writes about. Many more less well-known but interesting members of the Swedish American community are also included.

Worthy of mention are several uniquely Scandinavian institutions in the Twin Cities such as Ingebritsen’s on Lake Street, source of many Scandinavian foods and specialties, the American-Swedish Institute and it's benefactor, Swan Turnblad from Småland, and others. Scat-
Book Reviews

atered among all the biographical sketches are a variety of recipes for Swedish cooking which were collected by Ms. Lewis in the course of all her interviews, and some from her Swedish grandmother. The two dozen recipes are indexed and classified in the back of the book for easy reference. Major annual Swedish-oriented festivals and events are also listed in the endnotes, together with a complete listing of all the persons mentioned in this volume. Sources of information are also thoroughly listed in the Bibliography.

These brief sketches of Swedish Americans of several generations in the Twin Cities provide the reader with a warm portrait of many facets of life for their subjects in the period between 1850 and the beginning of the 21st century. All those interested in the Swedish American experience in America, and particularly in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, will be enriched by these sketches and anecdotes.

Dennis L. Johnson

From the Pacific


Ballard, Washington, was a mill town in Seattle, now a neighborhood of that city. The town was settled beginning in the 1880's as a working community for those employed in the sawmills, ship chanderies, machine shops, and fishing docks. Located just north of downtown Seattle and between Puget Sound and Lake Washington, Ballard has water on three sides. The community was settled mostly by Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns, with a scattering of people from Iceland, Denmark, and a few other groups. Most of these people immigrated directly from their old country. For a few it was the final stop of several in the U.S. or Canada.

The voices of Ballard, referred to in the title, are short chronicles of nearly one hundred individuals and their families settling in Ballard, culled from over 120 interviews collected and deposited in the Nordic Heritage Museum, a center for Scandinavian culture in Ballard. The interviews have been transcribed and are in the Museum's archives for future researchers. An exhibition and two videos were also created along with this book, and are available for loan from the Museum for groups who wish to learn more about Ballard.

The editor, Lynn Jolie Moen, a lifelong resident of Ballard, has organized the collection of stories into three groups. These are: Coming to Ballard, Living in Ballard, and Working in Ballard. Each narrative is written in the first person, as told by the person interviewed. At least six of the subjects have died since being interviewed, and the editor stresses the importance of these kinds of histories to record the memories of the "Vanishing Generation" in Ballard. Photographs of the subject of the narrative are included wherever available. A complete index makes it easy to locate persons and places referred to in the book.

Each narrative represents a life created in Ballard by the new American, with his or her family. Working in the mills, as a commercial fisherman, a tailor, a baker, a restaurant owner, or another career, each person struggled to survive and make a living in their new land and raise their families to succeed. All the stories are upbeat and optimistic despite hard times, wars, and recessions. The next generation largely attended college and often achieved prominent positions in the professions, teaching, politics, or other areas. The book provides many glimpses into family life and growing up in Ballard, including entertainment, ethnic societies, churches, schooling, and working.

These families tended to stay mainly with their own countrymen for churches and social groups, but mixed frequently and freely with others for their work and in their community. They got along pretty well with each other, but were conscious of the differences. One anecdote mentioned was the complaints of the Norwegian fishermen that the Swedes clogged the bay with their logging, so the Norwegians couldn't get their fishing boats in and out of the docks.

In addition to the value of this collection of stories to historians, this book provides a fascinating picture of one Scandinavian settlement in the U.S. which we can all compare with our own experiences and savor the differences with other locations, other decades of history, or other kinds of occupations. Those who would understand the full entirety of the immigrant experience will welcome this book into the menu, joining books about other Swedish communities such as Moline, IL, Minneapolis, MN, Chicago, IL, New Sweden, ME, and many others.

Dennis L. Johnson
Interesting Web Sites

How much is that worth today? http://eh.net/hmit/ppowerusd/dollar_answer.php
Examples of the cost to emigrate: http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/fares/index.htm
Viking Heritage Magazine: http://viking.hgo.se/Newsletter/default.html
Probate Index for Delaware 1680–1925: http://www2.state.de.us/dpa/probate/result.asp
Swenson’s New Book Index (see p.15):
http://www.augustana.edu/administration/swenson/books101-104-a-e.htm
Bremen Passenger Lists from 1920–:
http://db.genealogy.net/maus/gate/shiplists.cgi?lang=en
A web site for New Sweden, Maine: http://www.aroostook.me.us/newsweden/
Another web site for New Sweden, Maine: http://www.geocities.com/maineswedishcolony/
Nordisk Familjebok (in Swedish) an encyclopedia: http://www.lysator.liu.se/runeberg/nf/#preface
New York City Death Index 1891-1911: http://www.italiangen.org/NYCDDeath.stm
An easy way to search for names: http://expertgenealogy.com/free/search.htm
Old names of occupations (English): http://rmhh.co.uk/occup/b.html
Searchable database of Canadian soldiers from WWI:
http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/02010602_e.html

New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

Learning and Returning, Return Migration of Swedish Engineers from the United States, 1880-1940, by Per-Olof Grönberg, Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University, Sweden, 2003, 290 pp., paperback. This academic study is an expanded research report of about 6,000 Swedish Engineers who graduated between 1880 and 1919. (The author had previously written a paper on the subject, one included in the book Swedishness Reconsidered, Daniel Lindmark, Ed., 1999.) Highly detailed, thoroughly documented, and technical, this study may be of special interest to those in the profession or as a resource for specific immigration patterns among professionals.

Tidningen, Winter 2004 (Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota) has a good story by Larry Oakes on his research for his Swedish roots and eventual success, and finally his visit to Sweden. See also SAG 2002:1.

On a lighter note: Browsing the Crime stories section in a bookstore a series of books with a Swedish named heroine was found. The author is named Joanne Fluke and her heroine is cookie-baker Hannah Swensen of Lake Eden, Minnesota. She figures in the Lemon Meringue Pie Murder, Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder, Strawberry Shortcake Murder, Blueberry Muffin Murder, and the Fudge Cupcake Murder. At least the first one was nothing spectacular, but still a little feeling of smalltown Minnesota.
Genealogical Queries

Genealogical queries from subscribers to Swedish American Genealogist will be listed here free of charge on a "space available" basis. The editor reserves the right to edit these queries to conform to a general format. The inquirer is responsible for the contents of the query.

We would like to hear about your success if you receive useful information as a result of placing a query in this publication. Please send us your feedback, and we will endeavor to report your new discoveries in this section of the journal.

**Persson, Danielsdotter**

I am doing research on my great-grandfather's family who immigrated from Sweden to Paxton, Illinois, in 1864. He was Nils Peter Peterson/Persson, b Mar. 25, 1820, in Horn (Östg.) He was married to Carolina Danielsdotter, b. March 5, 1826, in Västra Eneby (Östg.) Their daughters were Kristina Louisa, b. Dec. 29, 1853; Maria Charlotta, b. Nov 6, 1856; Karolina Josefine, b. Dec, 22, 1859; and Clara Albertina, b. June 27, 1863.

The family immigrated to Paxton IL from Kättilstad Parish (Östg.) in July 1, 1864. Nils Peter, his wife, Karolina, and four daughters comprised the family at that time. However, my grandmother, Emma Peterson, was born in Paxton on March 25, 1865.

My research indicates that the family moved from Paxton, IL, to Orion, IL, in 1879.

In looking in church records, census, etc., I have been unable to find any mention of the one daughter, Karolina Josefina, in the U.S. I have also checked state death registers as well as marriages for information on Karolina Josefina Persson (Peterson).

In Mercer Co. Historical Society, the records indicated that at the time of Nils Peterson's death (Feb. 13, 1907), he was survived by five living daughters, which tells me that she was alive then.

I am trying to find out what happened to Karolina Josefina. Any help or advice would be appreciated very much.

Thanking you,

*Mrs. Leslie Enstrom, 3217 37th Ave, Rock Island IL 61201. E-mail: lrhenstrom@aol.com*

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**Johnson, Olson, Pearson, Svenssan, Anderson**

I am searching for the Swedish origins of my great-grandparents Martin Johnson and Hannah Olson. They were married by a Swedenborgian minister 17 October 1873 in Gloucester, Essex County, Massachusetts. Their children were all born in Gloucester: Charles (5 November 1874); Hulda Marie (1 February 1877); Anna Louise (9 October 1880); twins Gustaf & Martin (16 December 1883) and Gertrude May (24 October 1886). One of the twins died almost immediately; the other twin died just after his first birthday. The family lived at 25 Liberty Street, Gloucester. Hannah and Martin were divorced in 1887.

Hannah married William Wilson 02 January 1889 in Gloucester. Hannah and William Wilson moved to Seattle, Washington, before June, 1900, with her children, including Hulda Marie who had married Capt. Fred Fredricks in 1895. The Fredericks had daughters Helen Gertrude (born in 1896) and Ethel Louise (born in 1898).

When Martin and Hannah were married, his parents were recorded as John Pearson and Martha Johnson. His occupation was fisherman. Hannah's parents were recorded as Olof Svenssan and Bottilla Anderson.

When Hannah and William were married, her parents were recorded as Olof Olsen and Tilda Anderson.

Martin Johnson (signed Martin Johanson) renounced his allegiance to Oscar II, King of Sweden, and became an American citizen on 26 March 1875. His witnesses were John Wilson and Sigurt Anderson.

The obituary for Martin Johnson appeared in the Gloucester Daily Times, June 18, 1907: "Died at Almshouse. Mr. Martin Johnson, a former fisherman, and who for many years conducted a fisherman's boarding house, died at the almshouse yesterday, having been ill about two years. He was 63 years old, and has a widow and family in Seattle."


*Carol Gaiser, 14620 NE 13th Place, Bellevue, WA 98007-4008. E-mail: gaiser@mindspring.com*
Welcome back!
It seems that some of you were a bit surprised by the new costume for SAG, and maybe you should have had a warning about the intended change in the December issue.
However, the reactions have been very positive, most people like the new bigger pages and the possibilities for more and better pictures.
The intention is also to continue publishing the usual type of articles, lists of church members, etc, but also to publish articles that will directly help the working genealogist. Stories about how to use a certain type of documents, whether successful or not, are always welcome. So are all contributions from the readers, but sometimes they can not be published for various reasons. If we have had a number of stories on the emigrant and his travel across the North Sea, it might be too much with another one. Stories about strange happenings, serendipity, anything unusual have better chances of being considered for publishing.

Nils William
In this issue a page is devoted to the 95th birthday of Nils William Olsson, Founder and Editor Emeritus of SAG. If someone feels they would like to know more about this remarkable man, I would refer them to SAG 1999:2-3, editor Fritz Erickson’s masterpiece, which contains several articles on Nils William’s life and work. In the Swedish American Historical Quarterly for 1984, p. 322, his bibliography can be found.

What else is there to discuss with you, dear Reader? This issue is a bit late, but efforts will be made so that the next one will come to you during September.
September is a word one does not want to think of in late May, when the summer has finally found its way to Sweden. A recent visit to Värmland showed us that the Lilies of the Valley (liljekonvaljer) were showing their fragrant flowers. By now even the dandelions have been pushed away by the violet Midsommarblomster, and the other flowers young girls are supposed to pick on Midsummer’s Eve and then put under their pillow to dream about a certain young man.
Best wishes for a happy summer!

Elisabeth Thorsell

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SAG Workshop
Salt Lake City
17 – 24 October 2004

Welcome to join our happy group of researchers at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City!
The SAG Workshop is the highlight of the year – a fun learning experience and a chance to do your Swedish genealogy with hands-on help from experienced Swedish genealogists.
The social side includes welcome and farewell receptions, a buffet dinner & entertainment, Swedish movies, etc.
Contact Karna Olsson at 207 338-0057 or e-mail: sagworkshop@yahoo.com
Limited number of spaces!

Search DISBYT
Find Swedish Ancestors and Genealogists

7.7 million records of Swedes who lived before 1911.
Disbyt is the biggest genealogical database in Sweden.
The information is submitted by members of DIS society.
To search Disbyt and find ancestors is free. As a member you will be able to contact the submitters and also to submit Gedcom extracts from your family history program.


DIS
Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden
A non-profit organization founded in 1980.
Now 20300 members.
www.dis.se
### Table 1. Abbreviations for Swedish provinces (landskap) used by *Swedish American Genealogist* (as of March 2000) and *Sveriges Släktforskarförbund* (the Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies, Stockholm [SSF]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landskap (Province)</th>
<th>SAG &amp; SSF Abbr.</th>
<th>Landskap (Province)</th>
<th>SAG &amp; SSF Abbr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blekinge</td>
<td>Blek.</td>
<td>Närke</td>
<td>Närk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohuslän</td>
<td>Bohu.</td>
<td>Skåne</td>
<td>Skån.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalarna</td>
<td>Dala.</td>
<td>Småland</td>
<td>Smål.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalsland</td>
<td>Dals.</td>
<td>Södermanland</td>
<td>Södm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotland</td>
<td>Gotl.</td>
<td>Uppland</td>
<td>Uppl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gästrikland</td>
<td>Gäst.</td>
<td>Värmland</td>
<td>Värn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halland</td>
<td>Hall.</td>
<td>Västerbotten</td>
<td>Väbo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Häradalen</td>
<td>Härj.</td>
<td>Västmanland</td>
<td>Väsm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jämtland</td>
<td>Jäm.</td>
<td>Ångermanland</td>
<td>Ånge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lappland</td>
<td>Lapp.</td>
<td>Öland</td>
<td>Öland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medelpad</td>
<td>Mede.</td>
<td>Östergötland</td>
<td>Östg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrbotten</td>
<td>Nobo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Abbreviations and codes for Swedish counties (län) formerly used by *Swedish American Genealogist* (1981-1999) and currently used by *Statistiska centralbyrån* (SCB) (the Central Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Län (County)</th>
<th>SAG Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Code</th>
<th>Län (County)</th>
<th>SAG Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halland</td>
<td>Hall.</td>
<td>Hall.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Västerbotten</td>
<td>Vbn.</td>
<td>Vbntn.</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrbotten</td>
<td>Norr.</td>
<td>Nbtrn.</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Östergötland</td>
<td>Ög.</td>
<td>Östg.</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skåne</td>
<td>Skån.</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- a formerly Kopparberg (Kopp.; W) län.
- b includes the former counties (län) of Malmöhus (Malm.; M) and Kristianstad (Krist.; L).
- c includes the former counties (län) of Göteborg and Bohus (Göt.; O), Skaraborg (Skar.; R), and Älvsborg (Älvs.; P).
Sweden 2004

The counties (län)

The Provinces (landskap)