

6-1-1988

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Recommended Citation

Wikén, Erik (1988) "August Wetterman and His Fellow Musicians," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 8 : No. 2 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol8/iss2/6>

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August Wetterman and His Fellow Musicians

Erik Wikén*

The activities of August Wetterman and his musical companions in California have been described earlier.¹ The background of these persons in Sweden, however, is less well known and needs to be clarified.

I shall begin with the person who took the initiative to organize this journey on board the vessel *Jackin*, Gustav Norman. He was born in the parish of Sankta Maria in Ystad 16 June 1806, the illegitimate son of Juditha Norman. Early in life he went to sea, is said to have deserted in Valparaiso, Chile and then to have become the skipper of a vessel, owned by a Swedish carpenter in Valparaiso by the name of Apelgren. He made a number of voyages to many ports, including San Francisco.² In April of 1850 he returned home from California,³ bought the newly built vessel, *Jackin*, and employed as its captain, E.P. Lindqvist of Helsingborg.

The latter had received his certificate as a master mariner, something which Norman did not possess.

Lindqvist hired a crew of eleven men in Sundsvall, where the vessel was to take on its cargo.⁴

In July and August of 1850 an advertisement could be found in the Stockholm newspapers with the following wording:

“ Very Good Opportunities exist

for four or five musicians who desire to go to California and who can perform with brass instruments and can furnish good music. Free transportation is provided, with the stipulation that they furnish music during the journey whenever the captain so desires.”

The advertisement ends with an address, to which answers were to be directed.⁵

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The result of the announcement was that five musicians were employed to go on the *Jackin*. These were:

August Wetterman was born in Kumla, Sankt Ilian Parish (Väst.) 16 Aug. 1829, *not* 1828, the illegitimate son of Anna Lovisa Åström. The father is supposed to have been a Norwegian major posted to Stockholm. The surname Wetterman was taken after his maternal grandmother, Hedvig Ulrica Wetterman, married to a merchant by the name of Johan Åström. He became a musician in the Västmanland Regiment but was discharged in Sept. 1849. He is also supposed to have studied at the Royal Musical Conservatory in Stockholm.

August Wetterman married in Sacramento, CA 2 Nov. 1855 Edla Charlotta Augusta Törngren, whose journey to America Wetterman is said to have paid. She was born in Eskilstuna 4 Aug. 1826, the daughter of Per Törngren, an industrialist, and Johanna Charlotta Ungericht. She received a passport to America in Stockholm 6 June 1855 and arrived in Boston aboard the vessel *Samuel Appleton*. She stayed for a while with her father in Boston, to which he had emigrated the previous year.⁶ She then left for California via Panama.

Carl Johan Carlsson was born in Krogen, Björkvik Parish (Söd.) 6 Aug. 1823, the son of Carl Larsson, a farmer, and Greta Lisa Andersdotter. At first he was a musician with the Royal Svea Life Guards in Stockholm, later at the Skaraborg Regiment. He departed from the Hedvig Eleonora Parish in Stockholm and received a passport in Stockholm 19 Aug. 1850 for travel to Copenhagen.

Carl Johan Eklund was born in the Hedvig Parish in Norrköping 15 April 1824, the illegitimate son of Anna Ulrica Eklund, a servant. He first became an oboist in the Royal Göta Life Guards in Stockholm, later transferred to the Skaraborg Regiment. He was married in Maria Magdalena Parish in Stockholm 1849. He also received a passport in Stockholm 19 Aug. 1850 for travel to Copenhagen. He left the party in Valparaiso in Chile and enrolled as a clarinetist aboard an American man-of-war.⁷ When he did not communicate with his wife, she sued for divorce in 1855, which was granted after the usual period of one year, during which time efforts were made to locate him.⁸

Christian Hildor Skånberg was born in Hedvig Eleonora Parish in Stockholm 23 Oct. 1824, the premarital son of Christian Skånberg, a sadler, and Maria Christina Hallberg (they were married in the Svea Artillery Regiment Parish in Stockholm 11 Dec. 1824). He also volunteered as a musician with the Royal Göta Life Guards in Stockholm and later played at the Royal Opera in the capital. On 23 Aug. 1850 he received a passport in Stockholm for travel to a foreign destination. According to Kullgren, he left California in November 1855 for New York. He returned to Sweden and was married in the Hedvig Eleonora Parish in Stockholm in 1858. He died in Stockholm 7 June 1910.

Carl Johan Gustaf Sundgren was born in the parish of the Royal Mounted Life Guards in Stockholm 15 June 1826, the son of Carl Gustaf Sundgren, a trumpeter, and Hedvig Charlotta Lindberg. He received a passport to a foreign destination in Stockholm 23 Aug. 1850, when he was listed as a musician. According to Kullgren, he subsequently married a Chilean woman.

Finally a few additional data.

The *Jackin* left the port of Sundsvall 4 Sept. 1850⁹ and reached San Francisco in the beginning of April 1851. In August-September 1852 when the Swedish naval vessel, the *Eugenie* visited San Francisco, the *Jackin* was anchored there for repairs.¹⁰ In 1853 the vessel is said to have sailed under the Chilean flag.¹¹

Gustaf Norman died in Guayaquil, Ecuador 29 Nov. 1854.¹²

In addition to the notes below, the pertinent parish records in the City Archives of Stockholm (*Stockholms stadsarkiv*), Lund District Archives (*Lunds landsarkiv*), Uppsala District Archives (*Uppsala landsarkiv*), Vadstena District Archives (*Vadstena landsarkiv*) have been consulted as have the pertinent regimental archives in the Royal War Archives (*Kungliga Krigsarkivet*) and passport records of the Stockholm County Administration (*Överståthållareämbetet*) in the Stockholm City Archives.

¹Ruby Lindberg, "August Wetterman—California Pioneer" in *American-Swedish Historical Foundation Yearbook*, 1959, pp. 14-32; Ernest Ekman, "Wetterman and the Scandinavian Society of San Francisco" in *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, 1974, pp. 87-104.

²Carl Allvar Kullgren, *Dagbok* (Diary) in the City Archives of Göteborg (*Göteborgs landsarkiv*) (Copy in the California State Library, Sacramento, CA). See also Axel Friman, "Two Swedes in the California Goldfields: Allvar Kullgren and Carl August Modh, 1850-1856" in *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, (formerly *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*), 1983, pp.102-130.

³*Skånska Telegrafén* (Ystad), 27 April 1850.

⁴The Archives of the Sundsvall Hiring Hall (*Sundsvall sjömanshus*) in the District Archives of Härnösand (*Härnösands landsarkiv*).

⁵As an example *Aftonbladet* and *Stockholms Dagblad* 30 July 1850 and subsequent days.

⁶He received a passport in Stockholm 14 July 1854 and arrived in New York aboard the vessel *Magda* 30 Sept. He supposedly was a blacksmith.

⁷Letter from an anonymous Swede residing in San Francisco, dated 21 Aug. 1851 and published in *Post-och Inrikes Tidningar (PIT)* 1 Dec. 1851.

⁸Divorce decree issued by the Stockholm Consistory 20 Aug. 1856 in the City Archives of Stockholm.

⁹*Allvar och skämt* (Sundsvall) 12 Sept. 1850.

¹⁰Report from the commanding officer of the vessel, later Rear Admiral Christian Adolf Virgin, published in *PIT* 15 Jan. 1853.

¹¹Report from the Swedish-Norwegian consul in San Francisco, Johan Jakob Ludvig Herrlich, published in *Aftonbladet* 7 April 1854.

¹²*PIT* 26 Jan. 1855.

Additional on *The Swedes in Illinois*

In response to the article, "A Bibliographical Note on The Swedes in Illinois," in *SAG*, Vol.VII, No.4, pp.166-167, Harry H. Anderson, the Executive Director of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, has offered an ingenious solution to the mystery of why two editions of the same work, published in the same year, should eliminate certain biographies in one version and replace them with others in the second. Mr. Anderson offers the explanation that it was the non-payment of the subscription fees. Mr. Anderson cites a Milwaukee case in 1909, where a publisher sued over non-payment of subscriptions to a Milwaukee "mug history." "Perhaps something similar was experienced by the compilers of *The Swedes in Illinois*, and the editors made substitutions and replacements before the total press run was completed," conjectures Mr. Anderson.