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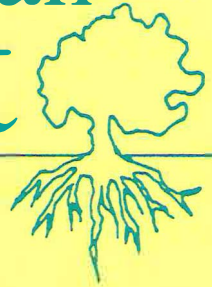
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Swedish American Genealogist



*A journal devoted to Swedish American
biography, genealogy and personal history*

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Footprints of Family⁺

Larry Oakes*

Part 1: A Swedish Homecoming

The family of Swedes faced my family of Americans.

We were in a parking lot outside Motala, Sweden, searching for our heritage. The Swedish man from town was telling us these were our relatives. Could that be true?

I pulled out a copy of an old photo from my briefcase. It was of my great-great-grandparents' farmhouse in northern Wisconsin, taken about 1905. Long-dead ancestors with farmer tans and Sunday clothes looked out from the porch.

One of the Swedes, a man named Rune, took one look and almost jumped out of his shoes. He hurried to his car. He came back with a grin on his face.

In his hands was a framed copy of that very same photo—same house, same people, same frozen moment.

Both families responded in the universal language of the gasp.

With his daughter translating, Rune said the picture had hung in his grandfather's home in Sweden for decades. "His brother sent it from America," he said.

Returning his huge grin, I said: "This proves we have the same blood."

Wondrous things can happen when you go digging for your roots.

Gravity of Family

Four years ago, a single afternoon with my father changed my life.

While Mom was at a high school reunion, Dad and I rooted around Oulu Township, Wisconsin, site of a homestead staked out in the late 1800s by my dad's great-grandparents. Their name was Gustafson; they had come from Sweden.

We searched several cemeteries for their graves. It didn't help that we knew only his first name, but not hers.

It jarred me to realize that our family literally had lost my great-great-grandparents. And it occurred to me that our family was losing even the memory of them and the others who had transplanted us from Scandinavia.

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Perhaps it was those realizations. Perhaps it was finding new common ground with my dad. All I know is, that day I began to feel the hunger, the pull—family gravity, I called it. It came on suddenly, and was powerful.

Under its influence, I scoured cemeteries to put names to faces in old photographs. I searched courthouses, attics, and archives to find mention of forgotten hometowns in Sweden, Finland, and Norway.

I sent e-mails and letters asking if anybody with our family names still lived there. One unforgettable day, seven months after I began searching, the mailman stuffed a letter with Swedish stamps into our box. "Dear relative," it began, and I wept.

Word spread in Sweden that an American branch of the family had made contact and more letters came. I developed an e-mail correspondence with Gunilla Klange of Stockholm. We share a great-great-grandpa, born in 1799.

Presents crossed in the mail. Gradually, letters began to end with "love." A family cleaved by the biggest migration in history was back in touch.

I shared discoveries and documents with my parents and brother, Greg. We had animated discussions, spinning off even more questions. It became inevitable that we would make a pilgrimage to the Old Country.

Old Country. My grandmother used the term when I was a boy. It was as if saying the word "Finland" would evoke too many feelings. Finnish relatives had occasionally pleaded with her by letter to visit, but she lived frugally on a small pension.

Eventually the Finnish relatives died, and she died too, without ever returning. Nor did our people from Sweden.

But the world has changed since they left it. Extraordinary journeys need no longer be one-way.

This is the story of our journey back to the Old Country. It is dedicated to those who could not go home again. We did so in their place, and in their name.

We found, to our wonder, that there still is a sense of home there for our American family. We found that you can learn a lot about what made you who you are. We learned that you can restore your family's memory.

It's one of the best stories I know, especially in these recent times of sadness and uncertainty, when family has become more important than ever.

Sailing on Moonbeams

On the night of July 3, 2001, seven of us—my parents, my wife, Patty, our three kids, and me—left Minneapolis-St. Paul on an Icelandair jet. We were bound for Stockholm. My brother and his wife and daughter were to meet us there, flying from Cleveland.

As the wheels left the runway, I sighed. It had taken three years for our three families' schedules and budgets to mesh. I had worried that something might prevent us from making the trip together.

Something almost did—my mother-in-law had recently learned that she had stomach cancer. But she urged us to go anyway. As we left in search of our history, we knew that the family members still making that history are the ones to appreciate most.

Darkness fell. The blondest group of flight attendants I'd ever seen handed out blankets and the passengers grew quiet. I pressed my forehead against the window.

The moon was nearly full. Through breaks in the clouds I could see its sheen on the North Atlantic six miles below. I thought about what it must have been like for those ship-borne immigrants more than a century ago.

They were headed for a place with a language they didn't speak, toward a future full of difficulty. But they were willing to endure the hardship because they sensed the truth in America's promise: with freedom and opportunity, people have a shot at being happy.

Industrialization and a population boom had eaten up jobs and land in Europe. Swedish society had classes, with unequal restrictions on land ownership and voting. The country had a despised peacetime draft and a state-affiliated Lutheran church that many citizens found oppressive.

Like most immigrants, my ancestors were not in the favored classes. And we've learned that the Gustafsons might have been part of a Baptist movement taking root in their region.

So they became part of 1.2 million Swedes—one-fifth of the nation's population—who were drawn to America between 1840 and 1930. For most, the price was never seeing their homeland or parents again.

Down there on the waves, they probably had salt herring, bedbugs, seasickness, and a lot of second thoughts. Six miles up, I had eaten a surprisingly good airline dinner and watched a movie. I had a blanket over my legs, a glass of merlot in my hand, my wife's head on my shoulder, and my parents and children dozing in surrounding seats.

And I was closing in on a dream at 500 miles an hour.

As the moon and I looked down into the black chasm my ancestors had crossed, I silently thanked God for the sacrifices they made for their future—and for ours.

The Homecoming

When the wheels touched down at Stockholm's Arlanda Airport, I felt as though we had returned to a place we'd never been. We stepped into the din of hundreds of Swedish-speaking voices.

It was enchanting to be enveloped in the language our people spoke for thousands of years. I barely understood a word, but I grinned like an idiot.

We changed a few hundred dollars into a few thousand *kronor*, rented a couple of Volvo wagons, and went out to find our heritage.

Sweden, with its pines and fields, looked like home. The freeway went through rock cuts that reminded me of Lake Superior's North Shore.

"No wonder the Swedes felt at home in Minnesota," my wife said. "Though probably not when winter came."

Despite the similarities, there was no doubt that we were in a foreign country. It took a while, for instance, to learn that *utfart* means "exit."

Predictably, for the males in our family, the word became a reliable source of amusement in a variety of contexts. Just as predictably, each misuse of the word caused the females to exchange looks that said: "Why did we marry these bozos?"

Stockholm, cradle of kings, Vikings, and ABBA, was everything the guidebooks said it was: ancient, beautiful, efficient, clean, cosmopolitan, cultured—a Nordic Venice. The freeway took us over blue waters crowded with boats as we passed the center city and utfarted into Hägersten.

That's the suburb where my relative Gunilla Klange lives with her husband and son. They met us at our hotel, and I recognized Gunilla immediately from pictures she'd sent.

She had short, light-brown hair and a whole-face smile that made her eyes crinkle. And, as my mom later pointed out, she has the same prominent jaw as my dad, my brother, and I do.

"What if we don't like each other in person?" she'd written me once. But our time in Stockholm buried that fear. It didn't take long for our families to realize that this was good; this felt right.

Golden Nights

The Klanges showed us all over Stockholm. We enjoyed the sights, but what we really loved was the time with them.

At dinner one night, they introduced us to traditional foods and customs, such as singing old Swedish drinking songs and tossing back a shot of *snaps*. The Swedish liqueur glowed in me like an ember.

Hearing the songs, tasting the *gravad lax* (marinated salmon), *matches sill* (herring with sour cream and red onion), and *kavring* (a soft, sweet brown bread), I felt we were piercing the curtain that fell behind so many of the immigrants after they left.

Most of our forebears had to devote so much energy to becoming American that some of their traditions were lost. I'm talking about those things that make a person feel his foundation—that sense you're not a seedling, but rather the newest ring on an old tree. I felt that with the Klanges. I could see what I had hungered for.

Standing, we Americans ceremoniously presented our Swedish family with wild rice, maple syrup, T-shirts, a Duluth Pack tote bag, buckeye candy, feed store caps, and other tokens of Minnesota and Ohio.

I passed out small, smooth stones I'd gathered from the North Shore.

For most of the summer in Stockholm, dusk lasts almost until dawn. That night, dozens of brightly colored hot-air balloons floated in the arching golden twilight.

The Klanges' balcony doorway framed the scene as we talked and laughed and toasted far into the yellow-orange night.

Wracking my *snaps*-mottled memory for a phrase from Berlitz, I said: "*Tack så mycket—det har varit en underbar kväll!*" ("Thanks so much—it's been a wonderful evening!")

I'm sure I butchered the pronunciation, but never had a canned phrase more perfectly expressed what I felt.

A Missed Connection

On our last day in Stockholm, we asked the Klanges to take us via subway to the suburb of Sundbyberg.

It was from Sundbyberg that my mother's immigrant grandfather, Ernest Sterner, received letters from his mother and brother. I had the letters translated a couple of years ago.

Ernest's father went to America first, and disappeared, leaving Ernest's mother to raise ten kids on her own in Sweden.

When Ernest arrived in America after the turn of the century, he became a chauffeur in Minneapolis and married a comely Norwegian. Family lore has it that they were very happy, until Ovidia died during the birth of their third child. Their wedding picture still hangs in my parents' house.

Perhaps grief closed him off. The letters from Ernest's mother and brother are full of pleas for him to write them. He must not have done so very often.

At the Sundbyberg parish church, a woman consulted records and told us that Ernest's brother, Sigurd, and mother, Amanda, were buried a couple of blocks away. Then she really floored us. "Do you want to know who from the family is responsible for the upkeep of the graves?" she asked, with Gunilla translating.

"Yes!" we all said together.

The name was May Schei of Sundbyberg. I realized with a start that she must be Sigurd's daughter—Ernest's niece. I had brought photocopies of snapshots Sigurd had sent Ernest in the 1930s of his daughter, May.

My mom beamed while the secretary looked up May's phone number, which Gunilla punched into her cell phone. I savored the thought of seeing May's face as Mom presented her with childhood pictures of herself.

An old woman answered, but she seemed confused. She couldn't understand what Gunilla wanted. She kept leaving the phone to call to someone who apparently wasn't hearing her.

Was this May? Was something wrong with her? Gunilla couldn't get her to communicate. Finally, she hung up and said she would write to May and see if she could get some answers before our trip was over.

Damn, I thought. Dad consoled Mom: "They're your relatives, all right."

That afternoon, with the Volvos loaded to the dome lights, we shouted hearty and grateful goodbyes and headed north into the Swedish countryside. We decided that you can have any color house that you want in Sweden, as long as it's red or yellow.

By dinnertime we'd arrived at Sala, a little town with a huge church tower, a market square, and a park with a pond and an arched walking bridge.

Four years ago, none of us had heard of this town. Now we knew that our people went back centuries there—had literally burrowed into its earth, in search of silver.

We went there to dig, too. But what we found was more precious than any metal.

Part 2: The Echoes of Ek

In October 1888, twenty-year-old Gustaf Viktor Ek left his hometown of Sala, Sweden. For generations, Eks had dug silver in the king's mine on the edge of town.

They were poor, and the work was hard and dangerous. Gustaf's great-uncle had been crushed to death in the mine. Another Ek died in a fall down a shaft.

Gustaf wanted a different life. Following his older brother, he made his way to Göteborg and sailed for America. There, he took the name Victor Oak, later Oakes.

He never returned. And because he didn't, I, his great-grandson, Lawrence Victor Oakes III, was born an American.

The Oakeses have had every opportunity the Eks didn't. But until recently, I was oblivious to that fact. I didn't know the Eks were miners. I'd never heard of a place called Sala. My family had lost its memory.

Forgotten Password

On a hot afternoon this past July, one hundred thirteen years after Gustaf Ek left Sala, two rented cars rolled into town and up to the Hotell Svea. As we unfolded ourselves from the cars and stretched, my father's eyes settled on the old railroad depot across the parking lot. He said, "That's probably where Grandpa Victor got on a train to start his trip to America."

It seemed that we had found one of our family's footprints. My voice felt a little husky as I replied: "Yep, we're back where he started."

The word Sala has become magic to me. In 1997, it was the password that opened the door to a forgotten chamber of our family's history. For months that

year I rummaged in courthouses and family basements, looking for clues to Victor's life.

Victor was a railroad track-gang foreman who died in Duluth in the 1940s. We knew little beyond that.

At courthouses and in archives, I searched his marriage certificate, census records, and death certificate for his birthplace. All simply said, "Sweden."

Finally, at the bottom of a desk drawer in my ninety-five-year-old great-aunt's house, I found a yellowed, handwritten list of long-dead relatives. Next to Victor, it said, "Sala, Sweden."

That night I typed those words into an Internet search engine and within seconds was looking at the town's home page. I clicked on the "e-post" icon and composed a message to town officials.

I knew it was a long shot. But three weeks later, I got my first letter from Sweden. I gasped when I saw the name on the return address: Ihrene Ek. "Dear relative," her letter began, and I blinked back tears. I was finally being taken by the hand and led inside.

Ihrene's letter opened a world for us: how Victor came from silver miners; who he left behind; how his lineage goes back in Sala to at least 1799, with the birth of Anders Ek.

Anders was my great-great-great-grandpa and hers, too. She wrote of how she had learned through her own research about the "Ek branch" that moved to America, and that she'd wondered if we'd ever find our way back.

"It's a dream come true," she wrote.

In Their Footsteps

Ihrene had spread the news about us to other Swedish relatives. That led to a letter from another distant cousin, Gunilla Klange of Stockholm, who was to become the Swede with whom I communicate most.

But Ihrene, tall, poised, and serious like the Eks in old photos, will always be special in a different way because she was the first Old Country relative to contact us.

Upon our arrival in Sala, she and her family took us from our hotel to a twilight picnic in a forest above the mine's shaft towers.

Ihrene knew this would be an important place for us. Much of our conversation that long, sunlit evening was about what life had been like for the mining families that lived there as long ago as the 1500s.

Late that night, I wandered the cobblestone streets alone. I tried to imagine the lives of the Eks, who had walked the same stones one hundred years ago and more.

I have their DNA, and yet they are strangers. Trapped in my own compartment of time, the only way I can get closer is to walk in their footsteps,

to gaze upon the same steeple or ridge and imprint a few images in my memory to match some that they probably had in theirs.

I walked past the towering church, the market square, the old city hall. I was glad that landmarks last, and sorry that people don't.

Sala's Red Carpet

Although our people were far from Sala's leading citizens, the town treated us like royalty. Officials ceremoniously welcomed us. Genealogist Maj-Britt Johansson put on a feast at her home. Museums opened for private tours. The newspaper did a story on us.

Ihrene tried to explain that they were proud that descendants of the city's emigrants would come all the way back. To know we still claim each other, across an ocean and after a century, means a lot to them, she said.

We felt the same, and were especially moved by their efforts to help us touch our family's past.

One afternoon they brought us inside Kristina Church, where most of the Eks were baptized, confirmed, married, and mourned.

The minister, organist, and a group of parishioners were waiting for us. Built in the seventeenth century, the church was gilded and ornate, with an enormous golden chandelier hanging from its high vaulted ceiling. We all looked up and turned slowly around.

They waited while we took dozens of pictures, then asked us to sit for a special service. "These are hymns your people would sing," the minister said.

One song made Greg, my brother, tremble. The minister said the workers sang it each morning, asking God's favor and protection before entering the mine. The tune was "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Holding our hymnbooks, we sang the Swedish words as best we could.

Afterward, church ladies served us coffee and rolls; this must be a worldwide Lutheran requirement.

Greg was smiling and shaking his head. He said: "'A Mighty Fortress' has always been my favorite hymn. I can't believe they sang that tune every day." Someone from the family responded, "Must be in your genes."

Later, we visited a miner's cottage on a lake north of town. This was where Victor was born and grew up.

Ihrene had sent me a picture of how it looked when Victor left. Like many Swedish cottages from the nineteenth century, it was a small rectangular box, single-story, made of squared-off timbers stacked horizontally. It had a window on either side of the centered door and a tile roof topped by a brick chimney.

Although someone later built an addition, my son, Mike, held up the old photo and clearly identified the original structure. It even had what appeared to be the same tile roof, nine courses from eave to peak.

The owner showed us into the two small rooms where seven Eks had lived when Victor was young. One room had a small corner fireplace and served as kitchen and living room. The other had been a bedroom. The ceilings had since been covered with wallboard and the walls were freshly painted and wallpapered. The wooden floor was varnished.

It looked like a comfortable little house. It was a bit difficult to imagine the poverty, the overcrowding, the hunger that were common then. It was a little hard to imagine the cholera, diphtheria, and other diseases that plucked many names from the Ek family tree.

A few hundred feet behind the house was the raised bed where a railroad track once ran. Ihrene said the tracks were laid in the 1870s, when Victor was still a boy. I sensed she was right when she suggested that with the first train, Victor began to wonder about the big world outside of Sala.

“Can you feel the wings of history here?” Ihrene asked.

Echoes in the Earth

Finally, it was time to visit the old silver mine. Our guides were Ihrene Ek and Bob Engelbertsson, a professor at Örebro University and an authority on the mine.

He had sent me copies of some of the mine's old payroll records. I'm still amazed that after knowing nothing about the Eks all my life, I now know that my great-great-grandfather received part of his wages in Swedish *riksdaler*, part in barley, and part in rye.

We donned hard hats, rubber boots, and rain ponchos and trudged into a room with a statue depicting a typical miner two hundred years ago. The small young man had shoulder-length black hair, crude and tattered shirt and pants, and blocky sandals with thick wooden soles to keep his feet off the wet tunnel floor.

We passed a huge harness, once used to lower draft horses into the shafts. “Here is where they would sing before going down,” Bob said.

As we entered the series of dimly lit, sloping tunnels and stairways, I began to get a sense of how tough the Eks must have been. It was cold and clammy. Before electricity, torches must have barely pierced its darkness.

The tunnels burrow hundreds of feet into the earth. It could take miners a half-hour just to walk to their work site. In the short daylight of the Swedish winter, they no doubt entered, worked, and emerged in darkness. Now, and presumably then, an estimated 10,000 bats hibernate in the mine each winter.

The tunnels open onto great, dark stone rooms—two hundred of them. Shafts were named for monarchs—Christina, Karl XI.

Silver from this mine—Sweden's biggest and periodically Europe's—financed the once warlike country's many conquests.

His voice echoing, Bob explained how, before dynamite, miners heated the silver-laced walls with wood fires to soften the stone before going to work on it with hand tools. I touched a wall. I imagined the smoke, the fatigue.

I felt so many things. Reverence. Awe. Sadness for the meanness of their existence. Gratitude for the chance to see this far back into our family's story. And gratitude to them for carrying on, for working, and living and loving as best they could.

My younger daughter leaned into me for warmth and asked when we could go back up into the sun. I wrapped an arm and part of my poncho around her. "Soon," I said.

Gift of Magic

We ate moose, an ancestral food, at Ihrene's house on our last night in Sala. I savored it as though I would never taste it again. Later, Ihrene took me aside and placed a tarnished brass lantern in my hands.

"It is from the mine," she said. "It is what the miners carried in your great-great-grandfather's time. I found this in an antique store in Sala. I want you to have it."

I was so touched that I hardly knew what to say. "I'll treasure it," I finally managed.

"I feel I am going to miss you," she said as our families said goodbye.

After driving a quarter-mile, I looked back. They were still waving from the porch, standing in that everlasting Swedish twilight.

Sala had put such a lump in my throat that I thought it would stay there permanently. I thought that after Sala, anything else would be a letdown. The Swede in me said that a guy could expect only so much magic.

But Sweden proved me wrong.

Part 3: Born in This Room

Our parade of four cars snaked along the narrow forest road. As we crested a hill, the trees gave way to a clearing. Below lay a shallow valley, its carpet of grassy pastures green and yellow in the July sun.

A few horses grazed inside low fences. The rutted dirt road rose and dipped along the valley like a slack, pale-yellow ribbon.

Just where the road climbed and disappeared into the forest, the buildings of a small farm stood, vermilion against the green wall of trees.

I had come 5,000 miles to see that farm. I hadn't expected it to be so beautiful.

The farm has a name: Norra Trollfall. Translated from Swedish, it means "North Troll Falls." It lies in a land where people once believed in trolls, a few miles from a village called Godegård, in the center of lower Sweden.

This valley was a cradle of my family, home to some of our oldest-known ancestors. We went there last summer to feel our past and divine our history. It had been 115 years since our immigrants left.

We thought it was about time someone went back.

Finding the Name

Carl Anton Gustafson, my great-great-grandfather, was born at Norra Trollfall in 1848. His wife, Hulda Charlotta Gustafsdotter, was born ten years later on a nearby farm called Kvarnkullen ("Mill Hill"). They moved to America in 1887 with their two daughters.

I didn't know any of this until recently, after my dad and I searched unsuccessfully for the Gustafsons' graves. I started researching.

A death certificate filed in Bayfield County, Wisconsin, yielded Hulda's name and the names of her parents. But none of the documents said what town they had come from.

Carl's obituary listed a funeral home: Bell Brothers of Duluth. The home amazed me; they'd saved all their information on Carl, who died in 1934. My heart raced when I saw they had taken down his birthplace: "Norra Trollfall, Godegård, Sweden."

Within months I had a file full of data on Carl's and Hulda's families, back to the 1700s. I was happy to have learned so much about their past in Sweden. I would have been even happier if we had found their graves in America.

Family Reunion

These were the people in our parade through the woods to Norra Trollfall: Jan Allertzon, our incredible guide and the keeper of public records in nearby Motala, drove the first car.

Next came the two rented station wagons with us Americans. Last came the Hjertner family from nearby Örebro—our latest newfound relatives.

Earlier, I had written to Jan, requesting information about ancestors. He e-mailed some, but then I didn't hear from him again until he showed up at the resort where we stayed near Motala.

Turns out Jan had been very busy on our behalf, but I hadn't received the progress reports he tried to e-mail via a translator. If I had, I would have known that he and a local genealogist had found the Hjertners, Swedish descendants of our same Norra Trollfall ancestors.

Jan, who wouldn't take any money for his trouble, said the Hjertners were ecstatic about our arrival and wanted to join us for a tour of the family farms.

I grinned, shook my head, and stammered thanks in English and Swedish. If I hadn't descended from Swedes, I would have hugged him.

The Troll House

Norra Trollfall was the last farm on our tour. We were ready to burst from the coffee, lemonade, rolls, meats, and cheeses the owners put out for us at every stop.

At the first three farms, some outbuildings remained, but the original houses had been replaced or changed.

But when someone built a new house at Norra Trollfall in the early 1900s, they left the old one. Jan estimated the wooden structure with the stone foundation and tile roof had been there since the 1700s.

This house is where Carl was born into a *torpare's* family. A *torpare* was a tenant farmer, a renter. Part of his crop or profit went to the owner of some nearby manor.

To Swedes of such station, land ownership was a nearly unattainable dream. Carl and Hulda were no doubt tempted by America's promise of land.

When I mentioned that they had helped start a small Baptist church in Wisconsin, Jan said religious intolerance could have been another reason they left.

He said a Baptist movement had been taking root in the region at that time. Such "free church" movements often preached emigration to America as a way to escape the state Lutheran church.

My throat felt tight as I entered the house where Carl had entered the world. Everything was small. I had to duck to go from room to room. My eight-year-old reached up to show that she could touch the door headers.

The plaster-over-stone living room fireplace was the size of a small hutch. Its chimney was shared by a fireplace in the kitchen. A steel stove had been retrofitted into the large kitchen firebox, but you could still see the hearth where our people had once hung their stew pot.

It was hard to keep a foothold on the circular wooden stairs built like an afterthought into a narrow stairwell near the front door. Its treads tapered from a few inches wide at the outside of the spiral to almost nothing at the hub.

Upstairs, a small bedroom and storage room were tucked into the peak of the gabled roof. What appeared to be crayfish traps hung from the rough-hewn rafters. It was hot up there, and musty.

I thought that the boys probably had slept here. Carl was the oldest of ten children, eight of them boys. They must have been packed like sardines to sleep in that room.

Pieces of the Past

I looked at rafters that had been hewn before the American Revolution. Reaching up, I pulled off a small shard of brittle pine bark.

I felt guilty about taking even this fragment from what seemed almost a museum. But I also felt entitled; this had been my family's home.

Back downstairs, I sat in a living room chair. I looked into the soot-blackened fireplace and imagined a winter night in the 1700s, candles flickering, wind howling, a man carving a tool of some kind, a woman at a spinning wheel, a baby swaddled in a cradle. Despite disease and crop failures, that baby lived, and now so do I.

I would have almost given a little finger to spend the night sitting within those walls. But the owner had been gracious; I didn't want to overstay our welcome.

Outside, I walked into a pasture. Carl never returned here, and I knew I might not, either. I wanted something permanent, something to help me remember this day, this feeling, for a long, long time.

I dug a few inches into the soil. I pulled an empty plastic medicine bottle from my pocket and scooped it full of earth. I capped the bottle and filled in the hole.

The dirt never made it home—it was seized in Minneapolis on the remote chance it would spread hoof-and-mouth disease or some foreign pest.

On the way back to the cars, I came to a pile of stones. Impulsively, I pocketed a couple of walnut-sized ones. Thank God they were rainwashed, free of dirt. The airport agent let me keep them.

Oskar's Gold Watch

That evening, we had ice cream with the Hjertners at an outdoor cafe in Medevi. Their patriarch, Rune, a short, ebullient man of sixty-four, laid an ornate gold pocket watch on the table. He told us its story as his 15-year-old daughter, Maria, translated:

One of Carl's brothers, Oskar, went to America just before he was to be drafted into the Swedish Army. Oskar was Rune's grandfather, my great-great-great-uncle.

In America, Oskar saved most of what he earned iron mining and logging. After six years, he returned to Sweden with that gold watch and a pile of money.

He then bought the farm their father had never been able to own—Norra Trollfall. Oskar in Östergötland and Carl in Wisconsin became lords of their own manors.

Rune said he still might have an "America letter" from one of Carl and Hulda's daughters. The letter told of a great "prairie fire" from which people ran for their lives.

Dad and I couldn't make sense of it. Jennie and Agnes lived in northeastern Minnesota, not on the prairie. Then it hit me, and I almost shouted: "Hinckley! The Hinckley fire that killed all those people!"

Rune promised to look for the letter and mail a copy. For our part, we promised not to wait for Minnesota's next disaster to send another America letter.

Then Rune spoke for a while, looking at us each in turn with misty eyes.

“What’d he say?” I asked.

“He said this has been a special day, and he thanks you for looking for us,” Maria said. “He said it is one of the high points of his life.”

Part 4: Following the Heart Home

Slowly, the church cook translated: “She—say—you—maybe—not—in—right—place.”

My wife, Patty, began to cry.

We were in the town of Evijärvi, Finland, last July, trying to find the farm where Patty’s mom’s ancestors had lived in the 1800s.

The secretary at the parish church didn’t speak English. But the cook, a big-boned woman in a white apron, took time out from preparing a wedding feast to translate what she could. A deacon helped search the old books of long-dead parishioners.

It was a long process. The church people eventually were stumped, and noting it was already late on a Friday afternoon, they suggested we check a neighboring parish on Monday.

Patty nodded, but we both knew that was impossible; come Monday, we’d be on a plane for home.

The secretary must have seen how important this was to us. Before we got to the door, she asked us to wait.

The Mission

Our 10-member family group had taken a ferry from Sweden to Finland, mostly to see the area around Vaasa, where my dad’s mother, Hilda, was born. But Patty and I also had scheduled a day in Evijärvi to do some research into her side of the family.

Before we left the United States, something had happened that made this side trip more important: Patty’s mother, Gladys, found out she had stomach cancer.

Gladys, a granddaughter of Finnish immigrants, grew up near New York Mills, Minnesota, in a farm enclave so Finnish that she didn’t learn English until she went to school.

I have always loved how you can sometimes detect tinges of the Old Country in her speech, although she’s never been there. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about all the things I love about her.

When doctors diagnosed the cancer, going to Scandinavia suddenly seemed out of the question. But Gladys and her husband, Jerry, wouldn’t hear of us canceling.

All through Sweden and Finland, she was in our thoughts. We called frequently, and we bought gifts. But by the time we got to Finland, what we most wanted to give Gladys was her history—pictures and stories of the place that echoes in her voice.

So Patty and I drove a couple hours on nearly empty country highways from Vaasa to Evijärvi, a pretty town wrapped around a hill, next to a large lake.

Samaritans and Wildflowers

After asking us to wait, the church secretary returned to the archive books and made several phone calls. Patty sat. I paced.

Finally, the secretary looked up, smiled and announced that she had found the farm. I high-fived the relieved Patty, then rounded the counter and hugged the startled secretary.

She beckoned for Patty to join us, and we looked over her shoulder at the one-hundred-fifty-year-old document preserved on microfilm.

It said that Gladys' ancestors, a family named Abrahamson, had lived on a farm called "No. 2 Norr Ena," which means "North End." She pressed a button, and the machine made us a copy while the deacon pulled out a map and made a couple of phone calls. He motioned for us to follow him.

I offered the secretary a fistful of Finnish *maarka*. She wouldn't accept them until I said they were a donation to the church.

Then we followed the deacon's little red car for about fifteen miles along a hilly two-lane highway through pine forests. We stopped at a house, where he turned us over to a woman who spoke a few words of English and seemed happy to help. It was as though a tag team of Finnish Good Samaritans was relaying us to our destination.

The woman brought us to a farm. Yes, the old widow who lived there told us, she knew where Norr Ena was. No, she said, there was nothing left but a field. But then she pointed to a painting on her kitchen wall.

It showed a scene from long ago: a small lake, a hillside behind, a network of cultivated fields and many buildings, including what appeared to be small dwellings—for tenant farmers, probably.

"Norr Ena," she said. We were dumbstruck.

The widow allowed us to bring the painting out into the sun, where we took pictures of it. After grateful goodbyes, we drove down to the lake. Wildflowers decorated the gentle, grassy slope, all the way to the water. They swayed in a warm breeze. "It's beautiful," Patty said.

We took pictures. Then I watched from the road as my wife walked into the field where Gladys' great-great-grandparents, Thomas and Greta Abrahamson, had worked a swatch of Norr Ena in the 1850s.

On the hillside where their five children might have played, Patty picked wildflowers for her mom.

Gunilla Comes Through

In Turku, Finland, we drove up clanking steel ramps and into the belly of a Viking Line ferry for our overnight journey back across the Gulf of Bothnia to Sweden. Twelve hours later, we were in Stockholm.

In the nine days since we had left, our amazing relative Gunilla had gotten through to my mother's relatives in the suburb of Sundbyberg. She had tried calling one of them, May Schei, when we first arrived in Sweden, but the woman who answered the phone had seemed confused.

Gunilla now explained that the woman was indeed May, the niece of my mom's grandfather, Ernest Sterner. May, Gunilla had discovered, is senile. Her husband, Elias, hadn't been near the phone when we called.

He was eager to meet us, as was their daughter, Ane, a college professor. We drove to Ane's apartment for lunch. I found a kindred spirit in the slender, intellectual Ane.

She'd written a family tree and seemed to get great satisfaction out of adding our names to it. Facing off with our respective papers, we played catch with one hundred years of family history.

Dad seemed happy for Mom. She'd tramped along for two weeks while we reconnected with his relatives; now it was her turn, and she was beaming.

Ane took us to the cemetery, where she and Helena Robinson, another of Ernest's grandnieces, showed us family graves. My mother's great-grandmother Amanda was buried there. Her husband had gone to America and vanished. Her headstone had no name, just one word: "Mor."

Mother. What better epitaph for a woman who raised ten kids alone?

Family Treasure

Ane and Helena brought us to meet May and Elias. He greeted us warmly. It was hard to tell how much she understood, but she seemed to enjoy our company and the old pictures of her that we had brought along.

Their house was full of family treasures.

I was drawn to an old black-and-white studio portrait on a wall. It was of a young woman with tightly pulled-back dark hair, a pretty face and a Mona Lisa-like ambiguity in her expression.

It was Amanda, they said—the Mor in the cemetery, my great-great-grandmother. I felt a sudden tenderness somewhere inside, where a voice said: "I'm so happy to finally meet you."

On another wall hung a painting that May had done of the red cottage, called Backgården, where Amanda had raised the children. We didn't know the name of Ernest's father, the husband who vanished in America. The Scheis told us his name was Erland.

There was a story, they said, that Erland might have been murdered while carrying a railroad payroll. The family never confirmed it. They knew only that he stopped sending Amanda money, and they never heard from him again.

Ane said that Amanda joked that it was a good thing he emigrated, or she would have had fifteen children.

Too soon, it was time to go. We exchanged addresses and promised to exchange pictures, old letters, and more information. It was a pact to bind these strands of our family together again.

They walked us to our car. May got into the spirit of the goodbyes. She took both my hands and led me in an impromptu waltz. For a few magic moments we danced on the grass as she hummed a tune and smiled.

We left the Old Country the next day. On the flight home, I thought once more of Victor Ek, Ernest Sterner, the Gustafsons, and the others.

Following less than four hundred years after Columbus, they secured for our family a place in the New World.

I wished they could see how well it's turning out for us there. I wished they could see how much we loved coming back to their homeland, and how happy we are to be what they made us: Americans.

The Circle Closes

Early one Saturday I drove the forty miles from Duluth to Oulu Township in Wisconsin, where this story began.

I parked beside the long-shuttered Swedish Baptist Church, walked out back and stood before the graves of my great-great-grandparents, Carl and Hulda Gustafson.

I had found them in 1998, after finally locating old cemetery records, handwritten in Swedish. They were buried side-by-side in unmarked graves.

The next summer, my dad and I corrected that indignity by placing a granite marker. In addition to their names and years of births and deaths, it says, "Swedish Immigrants—Oulu Pioneers."

I pulled a walnut-sized stone from my pocket. Three weeks before, I had taken it from a field at Norra Trollfall, the farm in Sweden where Carl was born in 1848.

With a garden trowel I dug a hole in front of the granite marker. I set the Norra Trollfall stone in the hole, then filled it back in.

I stood there a while, watching an orange sun climb through the trees. Then I got in my car and drove home.

Part 5: Your Own Story

Start at Home

A lot of your family's story might be right under your nose; begin at home and work outward.

Scour your house and relatives' houses for old photos and documents before someone throws them away. Make copies for yourself if relatives want to keep theirs. Color copies can look as good or better than originals.

On old photos, note the town where the studio was located; it can be an Old Country clue. Thank your lucky stars if someone has written identities on the photos; then do your descendants a favor by doing the same on your photos.

If an important old photo is in bad shape, have a negative and new print made to preserve the image.

Other things to watch for: old family Bibles—some have histories written or stored in them; certificates of baptism, marriage, citizenship, and death; school records; wedding announcements; obituaries; deeds, wills, and military papers.

Scan them for ancestors' parents' names, place of birth, and year of immigration, which you will need later.

If you have foreign letters, get them translated.

Give copies of all important materials to an interested relative, both to share the fun and back up your files. You also can scan your material, store it digitally, and e-mail it to relatives.

Draw simple trees for each branch of the family. This will help you keep relatives straight and clarify your next step.

Take a tape recorder and grill your oldest family members or those who knew them, before it's too late. Bring photos of unidentified people. Prod them into telling old family stories. It's a great way to interact with the family while adding to your information.

Tapping Local Resources

It's sad to lose track of relatives, alive or dead. An inventory of family graves is a precious gift to your grandchildren, and to theirs.

Note locations and, when possible, take pictures to preserve the writing on the stone and make it easier for future generations to find.

Track down unknown graves using newspaper obituaries from the library, death certificates from the courthouse, or records from local funeral homes or cemeteries.

The graveyard keeper, or sexton, often can provide a map for your files, showing the location of your family member's plot.

Courthouses can be family gold mines.

For example, at a county register of deeds I learned that my great-great-grandparents sold some of their farm's trees to a logging company for \$1,700—a princely sum in 1899. It helps explain the nice farmhouse they built. The office also had their U.S. Homestead land patent on file.

At a county recorder's office I found a marriage license application taken out by my great-grandparents in 1897. It gave his parents' names in Sweden -- something I hadn't known. Recorders also have death certificates for relatives who died in that county.

Many local libraries have U.S. census records on microfilm. Often, they will list the year an immigrant arrived in the United States. They also have a line for "birthplace," although often only the country is recorded, not the town.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has the world's largest genealogical library, has family history centers in nineteen Minnesota towns.

The centers are open to the public and have access to vast stores of microfilmed documents from all over the world. For more information, go to <<http://www.familysearch.org>> or call 1-801-240-2331.

Statewide Resources

It's getting easier all the time to find family history in Minnesota. Once you've gone beyond local resources, the process is easier and faster with a computer, but it can be done without one.

This year the Minnesota Historical Society opened an online index of people who died in the state between 1908 and 1946. You can find it at <<http://www.mnhs.org>>. From the site you can order a copy of the certificate for \$8. The phone number is 651-296-2143.

The Golden Valley-based Minnesota Genealogical Society offers classes, a library, and referrals to nearly all statewide genealogy services. It has branch societies for ten different ethnic groups.

They include some you'd expect in Minnesota, such as German, Swedish, and Norwegian. But there's also Danish, Icelandic, Polish, Irish, and others. For information, go to <<http://www.mtn.org/mgs>> or call 763-595-9347.

The Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm, Minnesota, contains one of the largest collections of genealogical materials in the Upper Midwest, including such diverse offerings as Sicilian deaths, African-American records, and lists of orphans.

This fall, the center's Conrad Peterzen completed indexing all naturalizations performed in Minnesota before 1955, a mammoth nineteen-year task that generated dozens of volumes.

One of the center's librarians showed me citizenship Declaration of Intention documents for my relatives, naming the ships they arrived on. He then showed me a book with old pictures of the ships—exciting! For more information, go to <<http://www.ironrangeresearchcenter.org>> or call 1-800-372-6437.

Minnesota also has institutes and associations for descendants of various immigrant groups. For example, the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis

stages many cultural events, and you can get Swedish atlases, dictionaries, and advice books at its bookstore. Go to <<http://www.americanswedishinst.org>> or call 612-871-4907.

National and International Resources

As you search branches into national and overseas records, the personal computer becomes an almost indispensable tool; it's like having the archives of dozens of nations in your home.

If you don't have a computer, get on the Internet at the public library; you'll see what I mean.

Recently, I typed my great-grandmother's probable hometown—Aalesund, Norway—into a Web search engine. I instantly got dozens of hits, including English-language Web pages with photo tours of the gorgeous fjord town and e-mail addresses of government offices, libraries, and ordinary citizens.

The genealogical help sites on the Web could fill hundreds of newspaper columns, so I'll just list a few of the more exciting ones I've run across recently:

- **<http://www.ellislandrecords.org>**

Here you can type in the name of an ancestor who arrived in New York between 1892 and 1924 and instantly get their arrival record, showing hometown, name of ship, their age, and date of arrival.

For a fee you can order a copy of the actual page of the ship's manifest, where your ancestor's name appears.

- **<http://www.familysearch.org>**

This is the gateway to the unparalleled collection of worldwide genealogical data kept by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Why do they collect it? Members of the church believe that families can maintain eternal connections to their ancestors, provided they know them by name. For them, family history is a divine mission.

Anyone can tap the vast store of records and get research guidance. Many of the birth, death, census, immigration, and other public records are now on CD or online.

- **<http://www.genhomepage.com>**

The Minnesota Genealogical Society calls this "one of the better general starting places on the Web." It has lots of how-to information and links to other helpful sites.

- **<http://www.mtn.org/mgs>**

This is the Minnesota Genealogical Society's home page, and it contains dozens of helpful links to vast stores of information on the Web.

Anna Märta's Story

Emelia Thunander Nordling*

Editor's note: I am indebted to Wayne Ohlsson of Salt Lake City, Utah, who brought this story to my attention. He provided me photocopies of three separate documents—a one-page, hand-written announcement that begins with the phrase “Open Calling;” a four-page, typewritten manuscript with the title “Anna Martha’s Story” and the notation “written by Emelia Thunander Nordling;” and an article from an unidentified Swedish newspaper with no byline entitled “Anna Märta’s egen berättelse” (Anna Märta’s Own Story). Wayne received this material from Lettie Thunander Sartorelli of Gaastra, Michigan.

The following translation of an introductory paragraph in the newspaper article provides some valuable background information: “A granddaughter of...Kristian Lund [Anna Märta’s father], Mrs. Christine White of Iron River, Michigan, brought this interesting document [the one-page, “Open Calling” document] when she visited her cousin, Mrs. Anne Marie Gullberg, in Undersåker last summer. Christine’s father, Lars Lund, who was married to Marta Johnsdotter, immigrated to Michigan, U.S.A., in 1924. It was Lars Lund’s sister, Anna Märta, who got lost by Åreskutan, but was found again after seven days of wandering in the forest. As an adult, she also immigrated to Michigan. She had married before she emigrated. Anna Märta’s daughter, Mrs. Emelia Thunander Nordling, tells about the family’s difficult life as pioneers in a short biography about her mother. It ends with her mother’s own story about the dangerous adventure in her childhood.”

It appears as though the four-page, typewritten manuscript, which is reproduced below, was the basis for the Swedish newspaper article and not an English translation of it. A figure and footnotes have been added by me to supplement the original manuscript.

oOo

My mother was a brave and kind woman who worked hard all her life until she died at the age of sixty-two. She was born in Sweden and lived there until she had married my father and had two small children. When my sister and brother were one and three years of age, respectively, they decided to come to America, the golden land of opportunity. They traveled third class, and my mother and both children were sick all the way across the ocean.

They came to friends in Northern Michigan and lived for a short while in Stambaugh, where my brother Edwin was born. They soon moved to Bates and settled on a forty-acre tract of forest land. Living was hard and it took many

* Emelia Thunander was born in May 1906 in Bates, Michigan, the daughter of Emil Thunander and Anna Märta (Martha) Kristiansdotter Lund.

hours to clear the land and make a small farm. For the immigrants, who could not speak the language, it was not the good life they had hoped to find.

They were used to hard work, so as the years went by, they tilled the land and raised their four children. I was born a few years after they had moved to Bates. When they reached middle age and the children were grown and married, the Depression hit us all. It was shortly after Franklin Roosevelt became president that she was taken ill with her last illness. Conditions were getting better and she would have had a time of easier living, but she did not live to enjoy it.

During the winter of her last illness she wrote the true story of her seven days on the mountain near her home in Sweden. She said she had no legacy to leave us but she had had one experience during her childhood that few people could match. This story will keep her memory alive with each telling, from one generation to the next. This is her story.

Anna Märta's Story

I was only seven years old on the September afternoon when I disobeyed my mother, disrupted the whole neighborhood, and caused my parents seven days and nights of fear and anxiety. We lived on a small farm in Fröån, Sweden, near the mountain of Åreskutan. The men had to go far off in the woods to work so the women and children took care of the cattle and the other chores.

The farms were small and pasture space was limited, so during the summer and fall the cattle were taken up on the mountainside to graze. Usually two women and some of the children would stay right there with them. They would stay in a small shelter and make cheese from the milk. During the day the children would stay with the cattle while they grazed near the mountain. Sometimes they would be near the edge of our little farm and I would beg my mother to let me go and watch them.

On this certain afternoon in September of the year eighteen hundred and seventy nine, I was again asking my mother if I could go for a little while. I ran to the edge of the clearing, but was soon playing with the calves and the children on the other side of the fence. When I saw that the herd had moved some distance away from where we had been at first, I knew I had better run home before my mother would start worrying about me. I started back but soon came to a fork in the road and did not know which trail to take. I decided on one path, which soon dwindled to nothing, and I knew I was lost. I suppose I panicked and ran until I was exhausted. I soon lost the wooden shoes that were tied to my feet.

I remember quite clearly the first night, but after that the days and nights were one continuous nightmare of running and crying and falling down exhausted and sleeping wherever I fell. The first night I still had hopes of being found or finding my way home. I finally came to two big rocks, crawled between them, and laid down. It was cold and I wasn't dressed for the night chill, but I remember dreaming that my father came and covered me with his *päls*, which was a coat made of bearskin. I felt warmer then and slept until morning.

Fröån

Personens namn, födelseort, yrke och näringsfång (bäckstuga, inhyses- och fattighuset), nationalitet (om främmande), lyra (orangeblå, blå, röd, vit, svart)	Födelse-		Ålder		Äkt.	Barn	Andra
	År	Månad	År	Månad			
<i>Arb. Kristian Lund</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>12</i>			<i>77</i>		
<i>Arb. Barbro Persdotter</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>12</i>					
<i>Arb. Anna Märta</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>10</i>					
<i>Arb. Lars Johan</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>15</i>					
<i>Arb. Lars</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>21</i>					

Fig. 1. Portion of page 208 of the household examination roll for Åre Parish (1876-1884). Here we find listed at Fröån the Arb[etare] Kristian Lund, his wife Barbro Persdotter, and their three children—Anna Märta, Lars Johan, and Lars.

I woke up very hungry but there were no berries left and I couldn't find anything else to eat. There were days when I couldn't find water, and I chewed on bark and leaves. It is strange that I did not get poisoned but nature must protect little lost children in the forest. There were wolves and big brown bears in the woods, but I did not see them. One night I thought I heard someone calling and I tried to answer but I couldn't seem to make them hear me. It may have been a dream but it could have been some of the many groups of people who were looking for me.

Meanwhile, people from miles around dropped their work and came to join in the search for the little lost girl, but as day after day went by without finding me, they almost gave up hope of ever finding me alive. But they did not give up

the search.¹ In those days people were superstitious and there were some that were said to have a sort of sixth sense. These people seemed to be able to predict happenings and even cure a person of a sickness, although he may be many miles away.

As a last resort, someone suggested going to see one of these men who lived in another township. Mr. Lofberg, a neighbor, offered to go.² When he reached the home of Mårten in Halabacken, he was astonished to hear that the man already knew the reason for his coming. Mårten said to him, "So you have come. Well, you could just as well give up the search for the girl, because you will not find her that way. She is alive and safe and will come out by herself near Fäviken. It will not be long now."

Mr. Löfberg brought back the message, but my parents found little comfort in it because they could not believe that I could live that long in the forest without food. However, they did not give up the search and still continued to pray for my safe return.

The strange thing is that it happened just as the man had promised. Near noon of the seventh day I came upon a path that looked as if it had been recently used. I followed it and soon heard cowbells, and then came to a herd of cows with their attending children. They called to their mother, "Here she is; here is the little girl from Fröån who has been lost."

The mother ran out, picked me up and carried me into the shelter and immediately sent someone to the nearest farm to give out the good news to my parents. It took quite a while to get the news to my parents as I had come out of the woods twelve miles from my home and had probably run hundreds of miles. They still did not believe that I was alright until they saw me. People had been warned that if I was found they were not to give me a big meal even though they knew that I was starved, but I remember thinking it was terrible that these people would not give me more than some warm milk when I was so hungry.

My father came to get me as soon as he could get there, and I think there were no happier people in the world that night than my parents, knowing that their little Anna Martha was safe at home with them. It took many weeks before I was completely well as my feet were raw and swollen and I was thin and weak from the ordeal. The memory of those seven days has never left me; it is as fresh in my mind as if it were yesterday.

¹ The following urgent message was apparently sent through the villages surrounding Fröån: "Open Calling / As the Fröån crofter Kristian Lund's little daughter, 7 years old, disappeared from her home last Friday evening by going into the forest and getting lost and searches have been conducted ever since the first evening by available people from Fröån, and today with reinforcement from the villages east of the church, but still not finding the lost child, people living in the area from Edsåsen to Hålland shall send one person from each household to report to the mentioned Kristian Lund in Fröån to participate in the search. This order is conveyed from man to man without interruption so that it will reach the households as quickly as possible and nobody who lives in the area may neglect this calling, which is our inescapable duty to report to the above-mentioned place as soon as possible to take part in the search for the lost child. / Åre and Fröån, 12 September 1879. / This calling may also be taken to Fröån and given to Kristian Lund." - Translated from the original handwritten document, which was too dark to be suitable for publication.

² This individual was most likely *arbetare* Erik Andersson Löfberg (b. 1836) who was living at Fröån with his wife and six children. - Household Examination Roll, Åre, Af:10, 1876-84, p. 209.

My Search for Ångermanland Ancestors in Sweden and America

Bruce William Anderson*

This paper describes the search for my Ångermanland ancestors—Nils Jansson Sjödin, his wife Ingrid Cajsa Isaksdotter, and their family—in both Sweden and America. I am a great-great-grandson of Nils and Ingrid.

During my first visit to Sweden in the fall of 1995, I spent time working with Birgitta Johansson, a researcher at The House of Genealogy in Leksand. Our focus then was on my ancestors from Västergötland. Each time Birgitta found an ancestor she would enthusiastically cry out “Bingo!” and, since then, I mark down this word in my logbook whenever a discovery is made. In my Ångermanland research, I have been blessed with many “Bingos.”

The format of this paper is both formal and informal. At certain times I will discuss how a source might have been located and, at others, openly pose questions that remain to be answered. Towards the end of the paper, I list some future areas of research in Sweden and the United States that might prove productive.

What Was Known About the Sjödin in 1995

I have chosen the year 1995 as a starting point because it was at about this time that I began to focus on knowing more about my Swedish ancestors. This is what I knew from family stories and other references as of 1995:

- The Sjödin family came to America on a small sailing ship and one child died during the voyage. Some recall that it was a young girl; others, that it was a young boy.
- The family lived in a shanty during their first winter in Chicago, where conditions were terrible and disease was prevalent.
- The Sjödin eventually changed their last name to Shaden or Shoden.
- Two sons may have been involved in the U.S. Civil War and one son died in the infamous Andersonville Confederate prison in Georgia. The surviving son was said to have picked up a gold ring when leaving the

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prison compound. One of my cousins has this ring. One soldier was a drummer, a story repeated many times in various descendant families.

- Nils and Ingrid Sjödin were active members in the first Swedish Lutheran church on the south side of Chicago (Salem). Their names appeared in a Salem Lutheran Church anniversary book. Our family also had a small clipping of a photograph of Nils and Ingrid with text.
- One of my cousins possessed an envelope labeled "Sjödins," which contained photographs. Personally, this was a pleasant surprise, for I was unaware that the photographs existed.

And so with these meager facts, I marched off into numerous genealogical wildernesses. Much remains to be done, but it has been a marvelous and fulfilling journey. I suspect that my paternal grandmother (*farmor*), who often spoke of relations in Sweden to a ten-year-old boy who didn't retain much of what was said, precipitated much of my interest in family history. An aunt on my mother's side also assembled a history of a portion of my Västergötland roots. And yet, when facts on my father's lineage were discovered, some of those fuzzy details from conversations with my grandmother over fifty years ago were once again recalled.

Before beginning, one could ask if, after generations of separation, I am proud of my Swedish heritage. As they say in Minnesota, "you-betcha." The Swedes, as well as those from other countries, brought so much to the melting pot that we know as America. And why should I be interested in ancestors from so many generations removed? My answer is that we have been blessed with a sense of inquiry. And yes, I want to walk where my ancestors walked; yes, I would like to imagine the wildernesses in which they struggled; and yes, I would like to sit in a church or two where my ancestors sat and worshipped. Like salmon migrating up natal streams to spawn, I feel an urge to return to the places of my roots, for it has meaning to me.

From Sweden to America and Chicago

Finding Nils Sjödin in the Swedish church records was somewhat challenging. I was advised that he came from Stigsjö Parish, which is located in the county of Västernorrland and the province of Ångermanland. I scanned the Stigsjö household examination rolls covering the time shortly after his birth but could not find a Sjödin family with a Nils. I did, however, make note of a Nils Jansson with approximately the same date of birth that I had in my records. Moving forward in time through two more household examination rolls, I finally noticed the entry "Nils Joh. Sjödin" for the former Nils Jansson. Bingo!

Thus I discovered that Nils Jansson was born on 18 August 1810 in the village of Sunne in Stigsjö Parish. He was the son of Jan Danielsson, who was

born in Sunne in 1759, and Sara Greta Ericsson, who was born at Innerbrån, a farm in Säbrå Parish (Ånge.) on 3 May 1774.

Tracing Nils's movements from farm to farm was also difficult, but I did locate Nils and his future wife, Ingrid Cajsa Isaksdotter, together at a farm (*gård*) Dunderkläpp and sawmill (*sågverk*) Hållänge in Säbrå Parish just prior to their marriage in 1839. It turns out that Ingrid Cajsa was born in the village of Slätt in Ljustorp Parish (Häls.) on 11 April 1813. Her father, Isak Ersson Norlander, was born in Slätt on 1 February 1790. Ingrid's mother, Anna Ericsson, was born at Rotsjön, a farm in Ljustorp Parish, on 17 September 1780.

I then lost track of Nils and Ingrid until finally locating the Sjödin family in the village (*by*) of Nyland in Säbrå Parish in the 1844-1855 household examination rolls. They had arrived at Nyland in 1845 and resided there until they emigrated in 1852. I learned later that Nils had obtained a passport for emigration in 1850. The following seven children were also listed: Johannes (b. 11 Dec. 1839), Isak (b. 26 Aug. 1841), Nils (b. 19 Dec. 1843), Erik Olof (b. 1 Oct. 1845), Jonas (b. 14 Sept. 1847), Anna Greta, my *farfars mor* (b. 21 Oct. 1849), and Katharina Christina (b. 30 July 1851).

I next wrote to the Regional Archive (*Landsarkivet*) in Härnösand requesting their assistance in finding descendants of brothers to Nils Sjödin. Fortunately, Thord Bylund of the *Landsarkivet* had previously conducted research to support an exhibit on the brig *Minona Gudiva* that was held in Härnösand in 1996. The connection was then made with my Ångermanland ancestors, who were passengers on the brig. A translation of information associated with the *Minona Gudiva* exhibit reads: "On the 17th of June 1852 it was mentioned in the newspaper *Härnösand Posten* under the title 'Cleared for Sailing: On the 15th of June.' The brig *Minona Gudiva* sails for Stockholm with passengers and lumber." Among the one hundred thirty passengers sailing from Stockholm to America were seven members of the Sjödin family. Only the five children whose names are underlined (in the paragraph above) boarded the brig.

If our family stories are correct, and one child died during the voyage, then the lost child would have been Isak. What happened to Jonas and Katharina Christina? I reviewed the Säbrå death records but did not find either child listed. Katharina Christina would have been almost one year old at the time of emigration. Did she die prior to emigration? Might she have been adopted by a family member out of concern for her safety on the voyage?

One passenger on this ship was the Baptist minister Anders Wiberg, who kept a diary of the journey that was written in English. Kajsa Lena Rosén of the Västernorrland Museum provided me with a copy of Wiberg's diary. His entry for 29 August reads: "Buried a boy in the sea." While not named, I am confident that the boy buried at sea was Isak Sjödin. Since the Sjödins were not part of the Baptist emigrant group on the brig, this might account for the entry of a child lost at sea without mention of a surname.

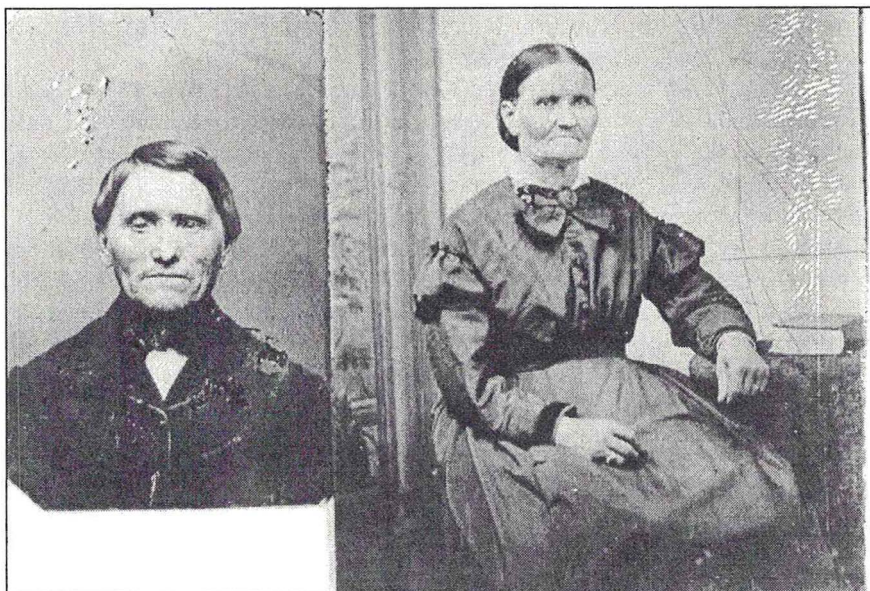


Fig. 1. The only known photographs of Nils Jansson Sjödin and his wife Ingrid Cajsa Isaksdotter. The originals were on metal plates and had no identifying inscriptions. Fortunately, a page from a Salem (Chicago) Lutheran Church publication, used the same photographs and provided the identification.

Anders Wiberg's diary indicates that the *Minona Gudiva* arrived in New York on 18 September 1852. Information contained in an index of Swedish immigrants to New York from 1851-1860—Sjoden, Nils; 42; *Minona Endiva* [sic]; Stockholm; 1852 20/9; 72:71:1326—indicates that the ship arrived on 20 September.¹

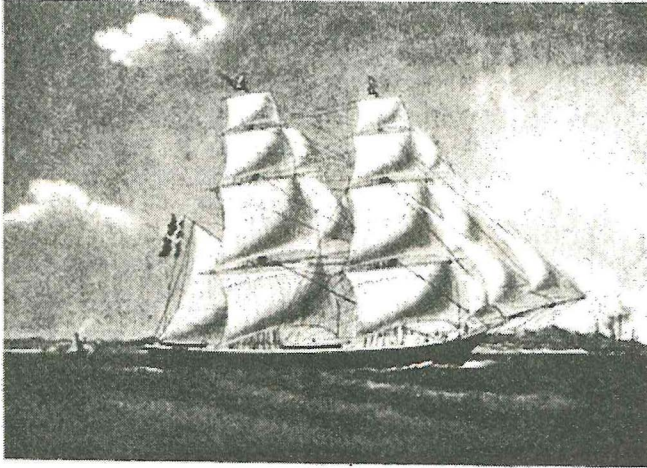
I don't know how the Sjödin's traveled from New York to Chicago, but I suspect that it might have been by passage up the Hudson River to the Erie Canal and through the Great Lakes. This was the route followed by Gustav Unonius and his wife in 1841, when on their way to Pine Lake, Wisconsin.² About this time, railroads were beginning to connect with Chicago from regions in Indiana and Michigan. The first train from Pittsburgh to Chicago arrived on Christmas Day 1858.³ As an estimate, it could be assumed that Nils Sjödin and family arrived in Chicago during the last half of October 1852. By this time of year, most leaves have fallen from the trees and brisk cold winds can announce

¹ Information provided to me by Jill Seaholm at the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, IL.

² *The Swedish Americans* (Chelsea House Publishers, 1997).

³ Herman Kogan and Lloyd Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History* (E. P. Dutton and Co., 1958).

that winter is on the way. There would have been little time to locate shelter, employment, and food before the heavy snows and colder temperatures arrived. In 1852 much of Chicago was a swamp, conditions were very harsh, and disease was abundant. I believe that our family stories, which spoke of Nils and family living in a crude shanty that first winter, are correct.



Briggen "Minona Gudiva" utanför Marseille.

Fig. 2. Briggen "Minona Gudiva" utanför Marseille (The brig *Minona Gudiva* off Marseille). Courtesy of Allan Palmgren.

A Brief History of Conditions in Chicago

Let's begin with a brief description of Chicago prior to the arrival of the Sjödin family. In 1830 one traveler could not even find Chicago. He later told friends, "Then I wandered down upon a half-dozen log houses and asked about Chicago. 'You're in it, stranger' was the reply."⁴ By 1835 the city had grown to about 5,000 persons, with 75 buildings. In this same year some 5,000 Indians, including 800 warriors, danced and howled in the streets as they received payment for the land purchased by the white man. By the time the Sjödin family arrived in 1852, the population of Chicago was approaching 60,000 persons.

⁴ Kogan and Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History*.

By the end of 1848, there were no more than 100 Swedes in the city of Chicago; by 1853, about 1,400; and by the year 1910, approximately 63,000.⁵ In light of these demographic data, the Sjödings were clearly “early Swedes” and it is reasonable to assume that they were among the first one percent of the Swedish immigrants in Chicago. I also suspect that the Sjödings were the first Västernorrlanders and/or Ångermanlanders to establish permanent residence in Chicago.

Apart from population statistics, an understanding of the hardships faced by this family is not complete without considering living conditions upon their arrival and in the decade to follow. The land was often a sea of mud and overflow control of rivers was not in place in 1852. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of his visit to Chicago during the winter of 1853: “In the prairie it rains and thaws incessantly...and, if we step off the short street, we go up to the shoulders, perhaps, in mud...”⁶ During the 1850s, the streets were raised and, with the help of labor and jack screws, buildings were also raised. And, of course, water pollution and safe drinking supplies were a challenge in this rapidly emerging city.

In trying to understand the challenges of the early Scandinavian immigrants, we are fortunate indeed that a Lutheran minister, Eric Norelius, documented the histories of the pioneer Swedish settlements in America.⁷ Pastor Norelius wrote, “Late at night the 14th of November [1850] we arrived in Chicago. The city then had a population of 28,260. It looked like a veritable swamp with small frame houses scattered about, yet something about the place made one surmise that in time a great city would grow here.” The Baptist minister, Anders Wiberg, who traveled to America with the Sjödings on the brig *Minona Gudiva*, had very definite opinions of the moral climate in Chicago. Writing of his countrymen, he said, “These our countrymen...had generally quite a bad reputation and were considered worse than the otherwise despised Irish.” He also attributed their high mortality rate to their “bestly and immoral way of life. Intemperate in eating old pork, rotten fruit, and consuming their favorite drink, *brännvin*, and exposed to the burning heat of the sun, they were wiped out in large numbers.”⁸

One must, however, attribute most of the high mortality rates to the disease cholera, which took such a high toll among the inhabitants and particularly the immigrants. From what I have read, cholera was a deadly killer before, during, and after the time that the Sjödings arrived in Chicago. Rev. Erland Carlsson, first pastor of the Swedish Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago, wrote the following in *Korsbaneret*: “The year 1854 was a year of trial, yes, a terrible year

⁵ Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, eds., *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930* (Uppsala: 1991).

⁶ Douglas Bukowski, *Navy Pier, A Chicago Landmark* (Metro. Pier and Exposition Authority, 1996).

⁷ Eric Norelius, *The Pioneer Swedish Settlements and Swedish Lutheran Churches in America, 1845-1860*, trans. Conrad Bergendoff (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1984).

⁸ Anderson and Blanck, *Swedish-American Life in Chicago*.

in the history both of the Immanuel congregation and of immigration. This was the year when the cholera epidemic ravaged so dreadfully among the population in general but especially among the immigrants.”⁹ Norelius describes the suffering of so many immigrants from many parts of Sweden with the following estimate: “It is commonly assumed that two-thirds of the immigrants who came that year to America were carried away by death.” As I read these histories, I was struck by the fact that the Sjödin survived these times and proceeded to add two more children to their family in America. I am also appreciative that these Västernorrlanders were apparently hardy, otherwise I might not have had the privilege of writing of my ancestors today!

In these early years, I suspect that Nils and perhaps his sons might have earned a living with their carpentry skills. Coming from areas in Ångermanland where lumbering was part of the industry, it is likely that Nils found employment in the rapidly growing city that was Chicago. In 1853 there were twenty-seven miles of planked streets, fifty-nine miles of sidewalks, and four miles of wharves. Buildings were being added thanks to lumber flowing in from the great forests of Michigan and Wisconsin.¹⁰

The Sjödin Family and Immanuel Lutheran Church

For many Swedish immigrants, establishing a church home in the new land was a strong desire that was not easily achieved. Pastors and churches, which were needed to satisfy the hunger for spiritual nourishment and community, were in short supply. I have some knowledge of this because my *morfar* (Rev. L. P. Lundgren) was a circuit rider in the northwestern portion of Minnesota, as well as portions of North Dakota and Canada. During his ministry in the years 1892-1923, he organized twelve Lutheran churches within the Augustana Synod. These farmlands attracted people from many areas of Sweden and my *morfar* was their faithful servant.

I asked myself, what was the motivation for Nils Sjödin and family to immigrate to America? Was it the desire to escape the State Church in Sweden or was the primary reason the desire by Nils and perhaps members of his family to seek a better life? Based upon evidence of the Sjödin family involvement in early Chicago Swedish Lutheran churches, I believe that the primary reason for leaving Sweden was the latter. In 1852 there was no Swedish Lutheran church in Chicago. A petition for a pastor was sent to a Pastor Hasselquist. A review of this petition indicates that Nils Sjödin was not one of the petitioners. Finally, Pastor Erland Carlsson, a gifted and energetic Lutheran pastor from Sweden, agreed to accept the challenge of organizing and leading a Swedish Lutheran church on the north side of Chicago. Norelius provides the earliest evidence of the Sjödin family in Chicago. He names eight families and twenty single persons

⁹ Norelius, *The Pioneer Swedish Settlements*.

¹⁰ Kogan and Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History*.

who were present when Pastor Carlsson arrived in Chicago, including “Nils Sjödin and wife Ingrid Kajsa Isaksdotter from Säbrå in Ångermanland. They and their four children live on the south side of Chicago.”¹¹ It is worth noting that Nils and his family lived on the south side of the Chicago River, whereas the emerging Swedetown was on the north side.

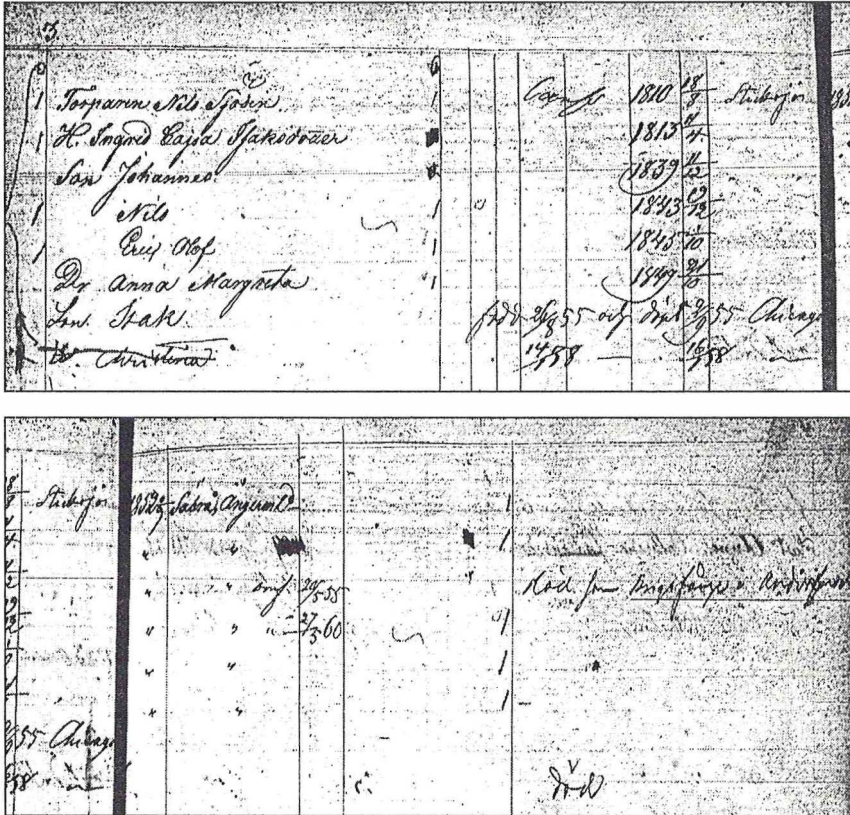


Fig. 3. Portion of a membership record for Immanuel (Chicago) Lutheran Church on which the Sjödin family members are entered. The top image is the left-hand part of page 3; the bottom image, the right-hand part. This record provides the following four pieces of information: 1) specific birth dates and places (Sticksjö [sic] and Chicago) for family members; 2) specific emigration information (i.e., they arrived in the U.S. in 1852 ?/9 from Säbrå, Ångerman[and]); 3) and the notice that son Johannes “Död som krigsfånge i Andersonville” (died when prisoner of war at Andersonville).

¹¹ Norelius, *The Pioneer Swedish Settlements*.

From Immanuel Lutheran Church records we know that Nils and Ingrid had two more children, with given names Isak (b. 26 Aug. 1855) and Christina (b. 14 Jan. 1858). Naming the new son Isak provides evidence that an earlier son Isak (b. 26 Aug. 1841) indeed died at sea. Christina may have been named after Katharina Christina (b. 30 July 1851). The church records also note that the oldest son, Johannes, died in the infamous Confederate prison Andersonville (actually Fort Sumter) during the Civil War, which coincides with family stories.¹²

The Sjödin's witnessed much change during the decades of the 1850s and 1860s: the rapid growth of the city, the Lincoln-Douglas debates in Chicago, demographic changes, changes in ethnic compositions, and ethnic and racial conflicts. In addition, during the Civil War years, there was likely the fear of ongoing escapes of Confederate prisoners from Camp Douglas, which was a short distance to the south of their home. Then there was the grief experienced by Nils and Ingrid due to the loss of their son Johannes in the Civil War and grief over the death of their youngest daughter, Christina, in 1868. And yet their broader family was now expanding, with the marriage of their daughter, Anna Greta, in 1869 and the emergence of a new house of worship.

The Sjödin Family and Salem Lutheran Church

On 19 February 1868 a petition was presented for the formation of a Swedish Lutheran church on the south side of Chicago. At this time, the Swedish-born population and their American-born children had expanded to the point that a more convenient church was needed on the south side of Chicago. The mother church, Immanuel, was supportive of this request for a new home, which was approved just five days later with the provision that "the new congregation adopt our order and constitution and that she joins the Augustana Synod".¹³ And once again Nils Sjödin was among the early leaders in this new church. The seventy-fifth anniversary book of Salem Lutheran Church documents that Nils Sjödin was one of six trustees of the church.

One evening during construction of the church, there was a cry that the Lutheran church was burning. Actually, two houses on one side of the church were ablaze and the flames and smoke appeared to be coming from that side of

¹² I have not been able to find the regiments or companies in which one or two of the Sjödin boys enlisted. Thus far in my research, my focus has been on military units from Illinois and listings of known gravesites at Andersonville prison. I am also aware that last names could have been changed, as pronunciation of the name Sjödin is not compatible with the English language.

More than 45,000 Union soldiers were confined at Andersonville during the fourteen months the prison was open. Of these, almost 13,000 died from disease, poor sanitation, malnutrition, overcrowding, or exposure to the elements. I also have to consider the fact that some prisoners were buried in unmarked graves at the prison and some were transferred to other prisons. Therefore, I am seeking a breakthrough in this part of the investigation.

¹³ *Salem Lutheran Church, 75th Anniversary, 1868-1943*.

The next known record of Nils Sjödin was recorded during 1871 in the Chicago Merchant Census. My wife and I were visiting the Allen County Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which includes one of the finest genealogical research facilities in the Midwest. When my wife was scanning titles of books in the Illinois section, she noticed the Chicago Merchant Census. Looking for Sjödin or Shaden,¹⁵ we quickly found Nils Shaden, who was listed as a carpenter. I then looked for Charles Anderson and there were many Charles Andersons in Chicago. For some unknown reason, I was suspicious of the Charles Anderson with G. L. for middle initials. Upon reviewing addresses, it became clear that this was, indeed, the son-in-law of Nils Sjödin and Ingrid, for their addresses were identical.

Nils Sjödin (Shaden) died on 10 September 1871.¹⁶ And then, amidst the family grief and less than one month after the death of Nils, the people of Chicago were to be confronted with another huge challenge—the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The address indicated in the Chicago Merchant Census suggests that the Shaden family did not suffer loss of their home. Immanuel Lutheran church and Swedetown to the north were, however, destroyed, but both rose from the ashes to live once again.¹⁷ Even though the Shadens did not lose their home, it had to be a time of apprehension, as there was widespread looting of businesses and homes.¹⁸ To attempt to maintain order, the city was entrusted to Lieutenant General Phil H. Sheridan, U.S. Army, with the city police working in conjunction with the army. On 28 July 1873, Ingrid Shaden (Ingrid Cajsä Isaksdotter) died.¹⁹

The Anderson Family and Salem Lutheran Church

At this point in this paper, I will begin to focus on the descendants of Charles G. L. Anderson and Anna Greta Sjödin. Very little is known about Charles in America other than the fact that he was a member of Salem Lutheran Church, that he was a “moulder” by profession, and that he was said to be good at his craft. Family stories say that Anna Greta developed somewhat of an Irish brogue derived from the neighborhood in which she lived.

¹⁵ The father and at least two sons—Nils and Erik Olof—adopted the change in surname from Sjödin to Shaden (or Shoden). There is also evidence in a book by Nils William Olsson, *Swedish Voters in Chicago 1888* (SAG Publications: Winter Park, FL, 1999), that by the year 1888, Nils had changed his name to Nickolas (Nic) Shoden (the name change from Nils to Nickolas is also verified on a photograph). Erik Olof became Eric Shaden and is also listed in the book. One interesting observation in Olsson and Wikén’s book is that, of the 6,400 persons identified, Eric Shaden and Nic Shoden are the only persons listed from Västernorrland.

¹⁶ His obituary was located in the Swedish newspaper *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet: Svenska Lutherska Tryckföreningens Politiska Tidning* dated 19 September 1871.

¹⁷ *Salem Lutheran Church, Centennial Anniversary, 1868-1968*.

¹⁸ Kogan and Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History*.

¹⁹ Her death was reported in the Swedish newspaper *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet*. The newspaper subtitle was now *Politisk Republikansk tidning för Svenska Nationaliteten i Förenta Staterna*.

As the city of Chicago continued to grow, with ever-changing demographics, the Salem Lutheran congregation decided to build a larger church further to the south. The second Salem church was completed during the fall of 1885. My grandfather, William (Wilhelm) G. Anderson, oldest son of Anna Greta and Charles Anderson, was fifteen years old at the time. Anna Greta (referred to as "Annie" in one U.S. Census record) and Charles G. L. Anderson had four children based upon Salem church records. Surviving children included William and Olivia Emilia.

William G. Anderson was, for many years, a head carpenter at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. He married Charlotte Olivia Jungblom who was born in Jung Parish (Vägö.) on 29 July 1876. Charlotte was the daughter of Johan Andersson from Jung Parish and Beata Johansdotter from Vinköl Parish (Vägö.). William G. Anderson died before I was born, but I know that he was an expert carpenter and craftsman and played the organ. He was also active in the Salem Lutheran Church and held at least one leadership position within the congregation.

During 1922, a decision was made by the Salem congregation to build another new church further south within the city of Chicago. The church is located at 74th and Calumet streets. By then, additional Augustana Lutheran churches had also been built on the South Side of Chicago. These included Bethlehem Lutheran Church (1875), Bethel Lutheran Church (1890), and Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church (1891). These churches served as more than spiritual homes, for most of the great-grandchildren of Nils and Ingrid met their marriage partners at two of these churches (Gustavus Adolphus and Salem). Since the membership at the time in these two churches was primarily Swedish, an all-Swedish heritage of persons born in America was continued for two and three generations in our family. As demographics continued to change and "the apples no longer fell by the trees," diversified ethnic heritages became more common. Today, the Salem Lutheran Church serves an African-American community and many of the former Augustana Lutheran churches are substantially diversified.

Grandchildren of Charles G. L. Anderson and Anna Greta Sjödin²⁰

1. Carl Robert Anderson (b. 1903; d. 1922). Not married; no descendants.

2. John William Nickolas Anderson (b. 1901; d. 1972). High school teacher (Lindblom in Chicago) who taught foundry classes. Married to Ellen Theresa Peterson (b. in Roby, Indiana, 1894; d. 1976). Ellen's parents were confirmed in

²⁰ In preparing this paper, I asked my cousins (great-grandchildren of Charles and Anna) to comment on whether Swedish was spoken in their homes when they were children. I have included some of their comments, since this glimpse into the Swedish language trends in our family might be of interest to our friends in Sweden.

the city of Kalix (Nobo.), Sweden. John and Ellen met when participating in the choir of Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church.

Children:

- Doris Edna Marguerite (b. 1926-)
- Betty Ellen (b. 1930; d. 1983)

Doris writes, “Grandma Peterson spoke much Swedish. Back then, speaking a foreign language was frowned upon, so my parents spoke Swedish only when they didn’t want Betty and me to know what they were saying. If I did something worth noticing, one parent said to the other, ‘*Titta på den stora*’ (look at the oldest one) or ‘*Säg ingenting*’ (Say nothing).”

3. Anna Lauretta Beata Anderson (b. 1906; d. 1983). Lauretta married Johan Wilhelm Mork (b. Västerås, Sweden, 1901; d. 1984). William (Bill) came to America during the 1920s and they met at Salem Lutheran Church.

Children:

- Jarl William (b. 1942-)
- Laura Charlotte (b. 1945-)

Laura writes, “My father spoke very little Swedish at home and went to high school four nights a week during the 1920s to learn English. I recall that my mother understood some Swedish. We learned a few words or expressions such as *Tack så mycket* and *Var så god*, and a word in Swedish was mentioned when we children would be interested in something that shouldn’t have concerned us. I remember learning *Ba, ba, vita lamm* as a child and now wish I had learned more Swedish.”

4. Roy Edward Anderson (b. 1909; d. 1956). Telephone communication worker. My mother, Violette Victoria Lundgren (b. 1912; d. 1997), daughter of a circuit rider Lutheran minister, met my father at Salem Lutheran Church. Violette was a member of Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church. Upon visiting Salem, she heard my father sing a solo with his rich baritone voice and she made it a point to meet him. Dr. Conrad Bergendoff confirmed Roy in 1922.²¹

Children:

- Bruce William Anderson (b. 1937-)
- Bonnie Lynne Anderson (b. 1941-)
- Keith Vincent Anderson (b. 1945-)

²¹ The family of Roy Anderson transferred to a new church home (St. Marks Lutheran Church) further to the south within Chicago just prior to or after the end of World War II. And yet, our family often revisited both Salem and Gustavus Adolphus Churches for services, dinners, singing engagements, and other celebrations. My sister Bonnie and I were christened at Salem. This prompted my Grandmother Anderson to write a note to me when I was a child, which celebrated five generations at this church.

My mother and *mormor* spoke Swedish when they didn't want us to know what was being said. My Grandmother Anderson often spoke Swedish with friends. Like my cousins, I learned some words and phrases, plus terms such as "*bonde ost*" (farmer's cheese) and "*tusen tack*" (thousand thanks). My father would recall, then mimic, his *morfar* calling in his cows on a small farm near Sparta, Michigan. Dad would shout "Kuscha" (*ko* is cow in Swedish). My sister Bonnie was a graduate of Augustana College and studied *Svenska*. When she realized the limited market for Swedish teachers in America, she switched to French. I, too, wish that I could speak Swedish. I am slowly picking up a few words here and there as a result of family research efforts.

5. Fredrick Oliver Anderson (b. 1911; d. 1989). Industrial arts teacher at Chicago Teachers' College in Chicago, where he met his wife-to-be, Lillian Lucille Lehman (b. 1913; d. 1984), the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. They met at a dance at the college, which Lillian's father had forbidden her to attend. Lillian was a grammar school teacher.

Children:

- Fredrick John (b. 1940-)
- Paul Robert (b. 1942; d. 1968)
- Cristine Ruth (b. 1944-)
- Martha Joan (b. 1955-)

Cris writes, "We didn't learn Swedish in our home, but tradition was followed for Santa Lucia Day (at home and church) as well as at Christmas (*smörgåsbord* and Swedish decorations). My parents were active at Salem Lutheran Church in the visitation program and my Dad was a deacon, taking great interest in maintaining the beauty of the church facility."

Martha writes, "Dad spoke Swedish to entertain us but never in a conversational sense. During a brief stint at Augustana College, I sent a letter home written in Swedish. I was shocked that Dad could read it and (he) actually corrected my grammar."

6. Lillian Marguerite Anderson (b. 1915; d. 1991). Grammar school teacher. Lillian met her husband, Douglas Swanson (b. 1912-), at Salem Lutheran Church. There are no descendants.

Reunion in Sweden

My wife Judy and I traveled to Sweden in May 2001. Less than two hours before our visit to the Härnösand *Landsarkivet*, we were informed that three relatives were awaiting us. What a pleasant surprise! Once again, a connection was made by relatives in America and in Sweden, each with desires to learn more about our roots. Prior to our visit, I was seeking information on two

brothers of Nils Sjödin—Eric and Olof Jansson. Awaiting us were descendants of Olof: Svea Linnea Pettersson, my father's third cousin, and Heléne Helsing and Inger Norlander, two of my fourth cousins. Together with Stig Brunned and Thord Bylund, we all posed for a photograph for the Ångermanland newspaper, which accompanied an article written by Stig Brunned.

Thord pointed to a high hill in the distance where Swedes once posted sentries on watch for Russian invaders. Once spotted, tar was burned to provide a warning signal. I learned that during a raid in 1721, the Russians burned the home of a direct ancestor, Lars Nilsson, on the Sunne farm in Stigsjö Parish. Going further back in time, as we stood in front of the *Landsarkivet*, we were within a circle of boulders that was said to be a judgement area prior to the introduction of Christianity.

Genealogical treasures

One of the documents that I received in Sweden and had translated into English consists of eighteen pages of fascinating histories related to four generations of my Ångermanland direct ancestors from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century.²² The cited paper provides excellent insight into events, trade, and lifestyles that bring names, places, and dates to life. I learned that four direct ancestors of Ingrid Cajsa Isaksdotter were very entrepreneurial businessmen (e.g., farms, shipping, fishing). One direct ancestor active in shipping—Israel Clemmentsson, born at Mällby, Överlänns Parish and died in 1616—received twenty barrels of barley as compensation for transporting soldiers from Narva to Sweden. On 2 June 1592 it is recorded that his ship carried moose hides and various skins to Lübeck. While discussion of the contents of this reference is beyond the scope of this paper, perhaps the mention of such findings will serve as an inspiration for other researchers.

With the help of Stig Brunned, a copy of the Stigsjö parish book has also been procured.²³ This is a second example of a rich resource. I am currently in the process of learning more about one direct ancestor of Nils Jansson Sjödin—Olof Johansson of the Brunne farm, Stigsjö Parish—who is said to have been an admiral in the Swedish navy during the reign of Erik XIV.

Continuing research

It is quite likely that Nils and Ingrid Sjödin wrote letters to Sweden that described their experiences on the voyage to America or after their arrival in America. Letters could have been written to older brothers Eric or Johannes or a younger brother Olof. Johannes and his wife did not have any living

²² Sten Thelaus, *Elias Thelaus' förfäder* (Härnösand Landsarkivet).

²³ Sigurd Sjödin, *Stigsjöbor, 1500-1825* (1992).

descendants, but might descendants of Olof or Eric have such letters among family archives? A stretch perhaps, but it is fun to dream on!

It is also likely that Civil War letters were written and that letters may still exist. In this regard, I will be attempting to define the descendants of Eric Shaden and Nickolas Shoden in America. At this point, I have located a third cousin, a descendant of Eric and Carrie Shaden, but he was not aware of histories associated with his Swedish ancestors.

Thanks in large part to Thord Bylund, one hundred forty-four direct ancestors have been defined from the following eleven parishes in the provinces of Ångermanland and Medelpad: Ljustorp (44), Stigsjö (37),²⁴ Säbrå (16), Sidensjö (13), Bjärträ (11), Gudmundrå (7), Liden (6), Indal (4), Överlänäs (4), Ullånger (1), and Häggdånger (1). I am confident that there is much to be learned on ancestors from some of these parishes. However, as the saying goes, "life is too short," so one must make the best of this wonderful gift.

Acknowledgments

I especially want to thank Thord Bylund of the *Landsarkivet* in Härnösand who so graciously shared with me his extensive records on my ancestry. I was truly overwhelmed by the wealth of information that was provided. During 1996 an exhibit was held in Härnösand regarding the maiden voyage of the brig *Minona Gudiva*. In assisting the sponsors of this exhibit, Thord conducted research on the 130 emigrant passengers, seven of whom were my relatives. Thord advised me that we are related along more than one path, but along one particular path we are eighth cousins.

Stig Brunned, a Stigsjö Parish historian and also a distant relative, has also been of great assistance. During a late May 2001 trip to Sweden, Stig escorted my wife Judy and me on a tour of the region around Stigsjö and Viksjö parishes. It was raining, cool, and damp, and we were concerned that Stig would catch a cold. He took us to a tall stone marker in a farm field on which leaders from Stigsjö were named on a brass plaque. Two of the names were distant relatives, one a former bishop of Göteborg. Stig also wrote two articles in the newspaper *Tidningen Ångermanland* highlighting our visit and presenting interesting genealogical information regarding my ancestry. Stig and his lovely wife Asta showed us warmth and hospitality that we encountered everywhere in Sweden as we met distant relatives for the first time.

Thanks also to Kajsa-Lena Rosén who provided me with information on the ship *Minona Gudiva* on which my emigrant ancestors sailed in 1852. Kajsa-Lena also provided my wife and me with a personalized tour of Murberget, Sweden's second largest open-air museum. Special thanks also to Jill Seaholm of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Astrid Forsberg of the Härnösand *Landsarkivet*, and Ingrid Lang for assistance with translations.

²⁴ Additional direct ancestors recently defined in footnote 23.

Genealogical Workshop: Documents Carried by a Swedish Emigrant in 1920

James E. Erickson

Harald Johansson (alias Harold Johnson in the U.S.) was born in Ljungby Parish (Småland) on 30 August 1903, the son of Carl Johan Johansson and Anna Maria Lindström. The recently released *Databasen CD-Emigranten Nr. 1 & 2 / 2001*,¹ contains the following information about his emigration from Sweden to the United States: name, Harald Johansson; age, 17; home parish, Ljungby (H, i.e., Kalmar län); emigrated from, Göteborg; date, 1920-01-10; destination, Willmar, [MN]; contract number, 105:47:8668.

Through an acquaintance,² I learned about the “Swedish” documents Harald had either taken with him from Sweden or received aboard ship and saved for almost eighty years until his death in Willmar, Minnesota, on 25 October 1992.³ They included a passenger ID card from the SS *Stockholm* (see document 1), his parents’ wedding announcement (see document 3), and two report cards from Continuation School (see documents 4 and 5). Collectively, they represent the types of documents that could be extremely valuable to a genealogist/family historian interested in “fleshing out” the skeleton of dates and places for ancestors (e.g., family group sheets and pedigree charts) built from primary source material. The documents are self-explanatory and specific details may be found in either the figure legends or the transliterations/translations.

The passenger ID card particularly intrigued me. A notice on the back of the card, which is written in five languages (Swedish, English, Norwegian, Finnish, and German), states: “When landing at New York this card to be pinned to the coat or dress of the passenger in a prominent position.” The information on the ID card pointed to a specific passenger manifest sheet and line, which, according to Per Clemensson at Göteborg *Landsarkivet*,⁴ enabled the agents of the shipping company to more easily and effectively provide extra services (e.g., help in buying railroad tickets) for disembarking immigrants. I have included a copy of passenger manifest sheet number 10 from the SS *Stockholm* (see document 2) for comparative purposes.

¹ See Elisabeth Thorsell’s review of this new CD on pages 50-51 of this issue of *SAG*.

² Special thanks to Burt Harrison, Bloomington, MN, for not only informing me about the existence of the documents highlighted in this article but also providing access to them.

³ *West Central* (Willmar, MN) *Tribune*, 26 October 1992, A-10.

⁴ Lennart Limberg, Riksföreningen Sverigekontakt, Göteborg, e-mail to author, 17 January 2002.

S/S "STOCKHOLM"
SWEDISH AMERICAN LINE

From Gothenburg 10 JAN 1920

MANIFEST SHEET NO.

10

NAME.
Harald Johansson

List. No. 13

Form & 347 3000. Okt. 19. See Bag'.

NOTICE.

SWEDISH.
Vid ankomsten till New York torde detta kort bäras synligt på rocken eller klädningen.

ENGLISH.
When landing at New York this card to be placed to the coat or dress of the passenger in prominent position.

NORWEGIAN.
Ved ankomsten til New York maa dette kort bæres synlig paa frakken eller dragten.

FINNISH.
Kuin tulette New York niin panna tämä lippu rintaane.

GERMAN.
Bei der Ankunft in New York muss diese Karte auf der Aussenseite des Anzuges oder der Kleidung so befestigt werden, dass sie deutlich zu sehen ist.

Document 1. Front and back of the passenger identification card issued to Harald Johansson aboard the SS *Stockholm*. The original card measured 3 1/2" by 4 1/4." Compare with manifest sheet number 10 from the SS *Stockholm*, which is illustrated in document 2.

LIST OR MANIFEST

arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of

S. S. Stockholm 8-9 Passengers sailing f

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
									NAME IN FULL	Age
Family name	Given name	Yrs. Mos.	Head	Read	Write	Read and write language (or, if incapable of either, in what manner)	Yes	No		
✓	Andersson,	Mårten, Alfred	✓	42	M	M laborer	Yes	Swedish	Yes	Swedish
✓	Bergström	Eror	✓	31	M	S laborer	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Bruce	Maria	✓	20	F	S work	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Christiansson	Auna	✓	33	F	M wife	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Christiansson	Astrid	✓	10	F	S Child	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	da	Karl	✓	8	M	S Child	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Flåjt	Sofia	✓	63	F	W work	Yes	Swedish	Yes	Finland
✓	da	Selma	✓	31	F	S work	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Curtarson	Erlil	✓	24	F	S work	Yes	Swedish	Yes	Sweden
✓	Hannar	Alma	✓	25	F	S work	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Henriksson	Evelin	✓	17	M	S laborer	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Hult	Axel	✓	55	M	M Painter	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Johansson	Harald	✓	16	M	S laborer	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓	Johansson	Selma	✓	16	F	S Waiter	Yes	Swedish	Yes	do
✓			✓			Machin-		English		

Document 2. Passenger manifest sheet number 10 from the SS *Stockholm*, which sailed from Göteborg (Gothenburg) to New York on 10 January 1920. What is illustrated represents only half of the left-hand side of a very large sheet. Note the correspondence in manifest sheet number (i.e., 10) and list number (i.e., 13) between this document and the passenger identification card (see document 1). Row 13 on this sheet contains the typed information about passenger Harald Johansson. See text for transliteration of the entire manifest entry for passenger Harald Johansson.



Document 3. Wedding announcement for Harald Johansson's parents, Carl Johan Johansson and Anna Maria Lindström.

📄 Transliteration of document 3

Inbjudes att öfvervara Vigsel-Akten emellan Carl Johan Johansson och Anna Maria Lindström i Ljungby Biskopsgård / Onsdagen den 2 November 1898 / kl[ockan] 3 e[fter]m[iddag]

📄 Translation of document 3

Invitation to attend the marriage ceremony between Carl Johan Johansson and Anna Maria Lindström at Ljungby Bishop's Estate / The Wednesday of 2 November 1898 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

☞ Translation of document 4

N:r ... 11 ...

Report Card

from ... *Ljungby* ... Continuation School
 in ... *Ljungby* ... school district in ... *Kalmar* ... County.

Harald Oskar Herribert Johansson

born ... 30 Aug[ust] 1903 ... and registered ... 3 Jan[uary] ... 1916, has
 attended the Continuation School for ... 1 ... semester ... 36 ... days ... 180 ...
 hours and is given the following grades for knowledge and proficiency:

Subjects.	Grades.
Religion	<i>Passed with great credit</i>
Swedish: Reading	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
Writing	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
Mathematics	<i>Passed with distinction</i>
Basic Accounting	<i>Passed</i>
Geometry	<i>Passed</i>
Drawing	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
History	<i>Passed with great distinction</i>
Science	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>

and during his time in school has shown ... *very good* ... diligence and ... *very good* ... behavior.

Ljungby ... on ... 14 Febr[uary] ... 1916 ...

Anders Carlsson
 President, Board of Education.

Carl Wahlstedt?
 Teacher

Handboksnummer

Avgångsbetyg från fortsättningsskola.

Som eleven *Harald Oskar Heribert Johansson*
 från *Ljunby 16* under å *1916-17* genomgått den fortsättningsskola,
 som är förenad med enligt Litt. *8* i normalplanen
 ordnade folkskola i *Ljunby* skoldistrikt av *Tralmar* län,
 vilken pågått i *6* veckor varder härmed intygat,
 att *han* vid dess avslutande denna dag befunnits förtjäna följande vitsord:

- I Kristendom *Med lovom godkänd*
 - Innanläsning *Med lovom godkänd*
 - Modersmålet:
 - Rättskrivning *Med nöje godkänd*
 - Uppsatsskrivning *Med nöje godkänd*
 - Sv. språklära
 - Räkning *Med utmärkt lovom godkänd*
 - Bokföring och affärsskrivning *Godkänd*
 - Geometri *Med nöje godkänd*
 - Historia *Bevillig*
 - Naturkunnighet med hälsolära *Med nöje godkänd*
 - Teckning *Med nöje godkänd*
 - Slöjd
 - Huslig ekonomi
 - För Flit *Mycket gott*
 - Upplysnande *Mycket gott*
- Ljunby* den *30* jan. år *1917*

Å skolrådets vägnar:
P. Hofsvund Skolråds-ordförande *P. Hofsvund*
Carl Melander Fortsättningsskolans lärare *Carl Melander*

Betygsgraderna äro

för kunskaper och färdigheter:		för upplysnande:		för flit:	
Bevillig..... = 3	Godkänd = 1	Mycket gott = 3	Mycket god..... = 8		
Med utmärkt lovom godkänd = 2½	Icke fullt godkänd = ½	Gott = 2	God = 2		
Med berömd godkänd = 2	Underkänd..... = 0	Mindre gott..... = 1	Mindre god..... = 1		
Med nöje godkänd = 1½		Dåligt = 0	Dålig..... = 0		

No 196. Vårt Lands Blanktextp.

Document 5. Avgångsbetyg från fortsättningsskola (Final Report Card from Continuation School) for Harald Oskar Heribert Johansson, who attended Ljunby 16 during the 1916-17 school year.

☞ Translation of document 5

General ledger number

Final Report Card from Continuation School.

As the student ... *Harald Oskar Herribert Johansson* ... of ... *Ljungby 16* ... during the years ... *1916-17* ... has completed the Continuation School combined with according to Litt. *C* ... in the standard plan for elementary school in ... *Ljungby* ... school district ... *Kalmar* ... County, which lasted for ... *6* ... weeks it is hereby certified, that ... *he* ... is deserving of the following grades at graduation today:

Religion		<i>Passed with great credit</i>
	Reading	<i>Passed with great credit</i>
	Spelling	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
Swedish:	Written composition	<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
	Swedish grammar	---
Mathematics		<i>Passed with distinction</i>
Accounting/Business Writing		<i>Passed</i>
Geometry		<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
History		<i>Passed with great distinction</i>
Science and Health		<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
Drawing		<i>Passed satisfactorily</i>
Crafts		---
Home Economics		---
Diligence		<i>Very good</i>
Behavior		<i>Very good</i>

... *Ljungby* ... on ... *30 Jan[uary]* ... *1917* ...

On behalf of Board of Education:

R. Hoflund

President, Board of Education.

Carl Wahlstedt?

Continuation School Teacher.

The grades are

<i>for knowledge and proficiency:</i>		<i>for behavior:</i>	<i>for diligence:</i>
Passed with great distinction = 3	Passed = 1	Very good = 3	Very good = 3
Passed with distinction = 2 1/2	Needs improvement = 1/2	Good = 2	Good = 2
Passed with great credit = 2	Failed = 0	Needs impr. = 1	Needs impr. = 1
Passed satisfactorily = 1 1/2		Poor = 0	Poor = 0

CD Reviews

*Databasen CD-Emigranten NR 1 & 2 / 2001.*¹ Databases on 2 CDs published by the Göteborgs-Emigranten project in cooperation with the Swedish Emigrant Institute and the Emigrant Register in Karlstad.²

The last edition of *Emigranten* was published in the fall of 1996 and was quickly sold out. Since then, researchers have anxiously awaited the promised new and expanded edition, which was finally available during the Genealogy Days in Borås.

The new *Emigranten* is available on two CDs and contains a number of historical databases:

1. *Emihamn* (about 1.4 million entries) includes emigrants via Göteborg (mostly), Malmö, Stockholm, Norrköping, Kalmar, Helsingborg, Copenhagen, and Hamburg.
2. *Emibas Göteborg* (about 52,000 entries), emigrants who lived at least 5 years in Göteborg before emigrating.
3. *Emisjö* (about 17,000 entries), sailors 1812-1913 who were registered in the shipping offices in Göteborg, Strömstad, Lysekil, Uddevalla, and Marstrand, and either died or jumped ship outside of Europe.
4. *Emipass* (about 16,000 entries) includes people who applied for foreign passports during the years 1783-1860.
5. *Emisal* (about 242,000 entries) includes people who traveled with the Sweden-America Line 1915-1950.
6. *Emiwasa* (about 43,000 entries), people who were members of The Vasa Order of America.
7. *SAKA*, a list of the approximately 2,000 rolls of Swedish-American church register films available in Växjö.
8. *Fartyg*, a smaller database with information about the Wilson Line's regular and extra emigrant steamers. Also contains pictures of ships such as *Rollo*, *Romeo*, and *Ariosto* and others.

Obviously, there are many good things for those who are interested in the various aspects of our emigrants. But one disappointment is that so little has been done in the area of data technology to improve these basically excellent databases.

To a certain extent, the program has been adapted to Windows, but does not fill up the screen like other programs. Clicking the maximize-button does not change the viewing area much; the light-yellow area increases.

¹ This review first appeared in *Släkthistoriskt Forum* 4/01, p. 27, under the title "*Emigranten seglar vidare*" (*Emigranten Sails Along*). Used with permission.

² Editor's note: Swedish and/or English versions of the new version of *Emigranten* can be ordered from Riksföreningen *Sverigekontakt*, Box 53066, 400 14 Göteborg, SWEDEN. The cost is \$130.

The most frustrating thing regarding *Emihamn*, the biggest database by far, is that the opportunity to standardize the names was neglected. The old spellings have been retained and one has to search for *Vetlanda* under both *Hvetlanda* and *Vetlanda*. This applies to all parishes beginning with Hv/V, not very many, but still. One would also wish for standardization of geographical auxiliary terms such as *Stora*, *Sankt*, *Västra*, *Östra*, etc. to something uniform. Also, no effort has been made to find obvious misspellings or proofing mistakes. For example, *Bogslösa* parish in Östergötland is probably mistaken for *Rogslösa*. *Ljusnarsberg* is often called *Kopparberg*, but those who are not aware of this will not be able to find the 232 emigrants from this area, or the 362 people who left from *Nya Kopparberg*. This requires the researcher to seriously draw upon his imagination to figure out how the parish has been entered, probably a healthy but unnecessary brain exercise. And one can only guess how the destinations have been transformed. *Ishpeming*, Michigan, for example, has at least 10 variations.

One nice feature in the search program, not available in the manual, is the possibility to click the "insert" button to return to the previous search in the search window and be able to edit it.

It is a big nuisance not to be able to cut and paste in the search results. Imagine searching for a relative, finding him or her, and then wondering whether he or she had a traveling companion. To find out, one has to copy the source code number and do a new search, typing it in by hand instead of just copying it in the appropriate spot. This could most likely have been easily accommodated with a modern database program.

Another oddity is that after 5 years, there are still no excerpts of those who traveled over *Malmö 1887* and who are still missing. *Malmö 1887* was forgotten in the first filming, but has been available on micro card for a long time and could have been added.

A positive thing is that *Copenhagen* and *Hamburg* are included this time.

The other registers are also valuable, smaller and, therefore, easier to leaf through.

Despite these shortcomings, I warmly recommend *Emigranten*.

Elisabeth Thorsell, Järfälla, Sweden

oOo

Scandinavia Vital Records Index: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001. 7 CD discs, \$16.50)³

³ Book review from *Minnesota History*, 57 (Winter 2001-2002): 438. Used with permission.

Present-day family history researchers are fortunate to have at their disposal an ever-growing number of powerful electronic indices that provide quick and easy access to original records. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently released an inexpensive and user-friendly Vital Record Index (VRI) on CD-ROM that should be of special interest to all researchers with Scandinavian ancestry. It contains data extracted by Church volunteers from approximately 3.5 million birth/christening records and one million marriage records for Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden covering a period from the 1500s to 1905. Search possibilities associated with this new database fall into three main areas—individual searches, parent searches, and collection searches.

The individual search screen is divided into four sections that enable you to search the VRI in various ways for either the birth/christening or marriage record of an individual. Every search requires a minimum of two actions. You must first decide which record type—birth/christening or marriage—you want to search and you must always type the given name(s) and/or last name(s) of the individual in question in the fields provided. Searches can be further limited by year, country, county, or city/town or by the names of the father and mother or the spouse.

The VRI contains a number of very useful features. For example, an <erase> button on the search screen clears all information currently selected and/or typed into a field and an <options> button on the search screen enables you to change default settings. In addition, the VRI automatically capitalizes the first letter of any name typed into the given name(s) or last name(s) fields. And you don't need to worry about the exact spelling of a name being searched, because the VRI automatically finds most spelling variations of any name typed into the first or last name fields. For example, a search of Värmland, Sweden, for all females named *Christina* born in 1859 yielded *Christina*, *Christine*, *Kristina*, *Kerstin*, *Kjerstin*, and *Stina*. Similarly, a search of Danes with the surname *Henriksen* produced *Henriksen*, *Henricksen*, *Henrichsen*, *Hinrichsen*, *Henricisen*, *Hendriksen*, *Hendrickson*, *Hendrichsen*, *Hindricksen*, and *Hindrichsen*.

The parent search and collection search features are extremely important ancillary capabilities of the VRI. When a particular individual is located in a birth/christening record, the names of the parents are usually listed. You can then do a parent search, which locates all other children of this couple included in the database. This search feature, when used carefully, enables you to quickly find an entire family. For each search resulting in a match, the number of the FHL microfilm (and thus the source of the specific record) is provided. This is of inestimable value for the researcher who wants to check the veracity of the information in the VRI with the original record. In fact, the collection search feature enables you to locate not only the FHL film number but also the time period covered and the exact number of records extracted from the film.

Two final comments—one a substantive criticism and the other merely a voiced frustration—need to be made. First, I was surprised to discover that the extra letters found in various Scandinavian alphabets (e.g., å, ä, ö, ø) do not appear in personal names and place names in this database. This omission—it is clearly not an oversight—is unacceptable and should be corrected in future versions.

Second, the Church readily admits that the VRI for Scandinavia is “a partial collection of the records available from the countries and time periods represented.” So, in spite of the 4.5 million vital records (and the estimated 10 million total names) included in the database, it will prove frustrating and/or totally inadequate for a significant number of potential users. To begin with, the four countries are unequally represented in the database. Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish records comprise 40%, 30%, 26% and 4%, respectively, of the total. Furthermore, the database is, for all intents and purposes, in its infancy. For example, Swedish researchers will quickly discover that only 13% of Swedish parishes are represented, that 4 of the 24 Swedish counties (Jämtland, Norrbotten, Västernorrland, and Östergötland) are not represented at all, and that 8 of the 20 Swedish counties included in the database are represented by 3 or fewer parishes.

In spite of the reservations noted above, this database is a significant first step in indexing vital records from Scandinavia. The VRI is a powerful albeit limited research tool that can be purchased at a bargain price. No Scandinavian genealogist should be without it.

James E. Erickson, Edina, Minnesota

oOo

Swedes in Canada

A Project to Research and Write a History of Swedes in Canada

The Lakehead Social History Institute takes pleasure in announcing the Swedes in Canada Project, with the goal of producing a history of the Swedes in Canada, from the beginning of their immigration in the late nineteenth century through their experiences in Canada to the present day. The history of the Swedish experience in Canada has not been described at book length and the institute has undertaken to rectify this shortcoming.

The Lakehead Social History Institute, an organization of Lakehead University and community-based researchers in Thunder Bay, Ontario, includes among its members Elinor Berglund Barr, an historian of Swedish origin whose various publications include a bibliography of the Swedish experience in Canada

and *The Scandinavian Home Society 1923-1993: A Place to Meet, A Place to Eat*. This illustrated history of an important Thunder Bay institution required intensive research of the Swedish experience in Thunder Bay and equips Elinor well to expand her research across the country.

The first objective of the Institute, working in co-operation with the Reverend Donald Sjöberg of Winnipeg, a retired bishop of the Lutheran Church in western Canada, has been to raise the funds required to carry out the research program. Thanks especially to contributions by lodges of the Vasa Order of America in Manitoba and Alberta and by the Swedish Embassy, in addition to individual contributions, the Institute has already obtained almost half of the research budget of \$25,000.

As part of the fundraising effort, the Institute has established a program by which individuals can honor Swedish immigrants to Canada in the book. For each donation of one hundred dollars (\$100) the name of the immigrant, the date of immigration, the place in Sweden from which the immigrant came, and the place the immigrant settled in Canada, together with the name of the donor or a person being honored by the donation, will be published in the book.

Elinor Berglund Barr will be studying the experiences of Swedes in Canada from coast to coast as well as in Sweden and the United States. Dr. Ernie Epp, co-director of the Institute and a member of the history department at Lakehead University, will supervise her in this research and in the development of the history.

Elinor is interested in receiving printed family trees of Swedes who lived in Canada and also in their Canadian experiences as shown in family histories, documents, correspondence, memoirs, diaries, photos, newspaper clippings, and the like. Please send copies only (not originals) to her. They may be in either Swedish or English.

Important information for interested individuals:

- Project Web Site: <www.swedesincanada.ca>
- Ernie Epp, Co-Director
E-mail: <eepp@flash.lakeheadu.ca>
- Elinor Berglund Barr, Research and Writer
Postal address: 104 Ray Blvd., Thunder Bay, ON, Canada P7B 4C4
Telephone and FAX: 807-344-8355
E-mail: <pebarr@tbaytel.net>
- Donald Sjöberg, National Fundraising Coordinator
Postal Address: 34 Ramsgate Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0V4
Telephone: 204-885-7234
E-mail: <dsjoberg@gatewest.net>

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.

Rundgren

I am trying to establish contact with anyone researching or interested in the family line Rundgren from Värmland. Olof W. Rundgren was b. in Eda Parish 22 Jan. 1839, the son of Olof Wilhelm Rundgren (b. Köla Parish 16 Jan. 1811; d. by 1880) and Brita Fosberg (b. Eda between 1831-38; d. Eda 1846). Olof's grandparents are believed to be Olof Run(d)gren and Annika Bengtsdotter.

Olof immigrated to the U.S. in 1869 and d. Clinton Co., IA, 1874. Prior to his death, he had married Martha Nilsson (Nelson) (b. Hallebol, Köla Parish 16 Aug. 1846; d. Clinton, IA, 29 Jan. 1922).

Russell James Rundgren
107 Alost Dr.
Camarillo, CA 93010-1303
E-mail: <rcaroljim@aol.com>

1232

Swanfeldt, Eriksson/Erickson

I am seeking information regarding Axel Wilhelm Swanfeldt, who was b. in Söderköping (Östg.) in 1847 and d. in Los Angeles, CA, in 1925. He learned the sailmaker's trade in Oslo, Norway, in 1865. He is believed to have jumped ship in Galveston, TX, in 1869. He became a businessman—Görran & Swanfeldt: Sailmakers and Tents—in Galveston. Axel married Carolina Johanna Anderson in 1873 and the couple had the following children: Alice Mary (1874-1898), Axelina (1876-??), Andrew (1881-1959), John Knute (1885-197?), Wm. Axel (1887-1956), and Edla Johanna (1890-1969).

I am also seeking information about Nils Johan Eriksson, who was b. somewhere in southern Sweden on 17 Dec. 1857 (1854?). He worked as a laborer in the woods, possibly as a builder of log homes, until he emigrated in 1887. Nils Johan met Amanda Charlotta Lindholm in Chicago, where they were married by a justice of the peace on 14 October 1887.

Amanda Charlotta Sundberg Lindholm was b. in Sävast, Överluleå (Nobo.) on 12 Aug. 1856, the daughter of Nils Nilsson Lindholm and Anna Stina Sundberg. She moved to Stockholm/Adolf Fredrik Parish in 1878 and to

Stockholm/Maria Parish in 1882. Amanda apparently emigrated in 1882 or 1883, traveling with a dissident church group that was met in New York by church officials, who helped them get settled and arranged jobs. Amanda got a job as a nanny with a doctor's family. She moved with them to Florida (or possibly Florid, Illinois, which is southwest of Chicago). She left this job and went to Chicago to work as a seamstress in a clothing factory.

Nils Johan and Amanda had the following children: Janny (b. in the town of Lake [now part of Chicago], IL, 9 Aug. 1888; d. Duluth, MN, 5 Dec. 1891); Gideon (b. Illinois, 27 Jan. 1890; d. Duluth, MN, 3 Dec. 1891); Elin Marie (b. Duluth, MN, 5 Mar. 1891; d. Vallejo, CA, 10 Mar. 1968); George Walter (b. Grantsburg, Burnett Co., WI, 26 Dec. 1894; d. Martinez, Napa Co., CA, 26 Aug. 1967); and Walter Daniel (b. Pine City, Pine Co., MN, 14 May 1897; d. Inglewood, Los Angeles Co., CA, 26 Dec. 1984).

Nils Johan Erickson d. on 18 May 1903 (possibly in Duluth, MN or Brule, WI). Amanda Charlotta d. in Berkeley, Alameda Co., CA, on 4 Sept. 1945.

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Malm, Johnson, and John Berg Update

According to his death certificate, Nels J. Malm was born in Sweden on 24 April 1858 and died in St. Paul, MN, on 26 Aug. 1924. I would like to know where he came from in Sweden and where he got the name Malm. Did he come straight into the U.S. or did he go through Canada?

I am also seeking information on Nils Johnson, b. in Vinslöv Parish on 25 April 1858. Both he and his brother, Ola, emigrated, though not at the same time. Where in the U.S. did they live?

Finally, I would like to provide an update on the article "Who Was Soldier John Berg from Färila?" published in the June 2001 issue of *SAG*. A new subscriber to *SAG*, Ingegård Jonsson, who lives near Färila, phoned me one day to tell her story. When she received her first issue of *SAG*, she gave it to a cousin to read. Soon her cousin told her very enthusiastically that their ancestor, Jonas, had his family in the article about the soldier from Färila. Jonas was a half-brother to the soldier John Berg. So now they are working hard to find more information about the family and the "lost" soldier.

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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).

<i>Landskap</i> (Province)	SAG & SS Abbr.	<i>Landskap</i> (Province)	SAG & SS Abbr.
Blekinge	Blek.	Närke	Närk.
Bohuslän	Bohu.	Skåne	Skån.
Dalarna	Dala.	Småland	Smål.
Dalsland	Dals.	Södermanland	Södm.
Gotland	Gotl.	Uppland	Uppl.
Gästrikland	Gäst.	Värmland	Värm.
Halland	Hall.	Västerbotten	Väbo.
Hälsingland	Häls.	Västergötland	Vägö.
Härjedalen	Härj.	Västmanland	Väsm.
Jämtland	Jämt.	Ångermanland	Ånge.
Lappland	Lapp.	Öland	Öland
Medelpad	Mede.	Östergötland	Östg.
Norrbottn	Nobo.		

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).

<i>Län</i> (County)	SAG Abbr.	SCB Abbr.	SCB Code	<i>Län</i> (County)	SAG Abbr.	SCB Abbr.	SCB Code
Blekinge	Blek.	Blek.	K	Stockholm	Stock.	Sthm.	AB
Dalarna ^a		Dirn.	W	Södermanland	Söd.	Södm.	D
Gotland	Gotl.	Gotl.	I	Uppsala	Upps.	Upps.	C
Gävleborg	Gävl.	Gävl.	X	Värmland	Värm.	Vrml.	S
Halland	Hall.	Hall.	N	Västerbotten	Vbn.	Vbtn.	AC
Jämtland	Jämt.	Jmtl.	Z	Västernorrland	Vn.	Vnrl.	Y
Jönköping	Jön.	Jkpg.	F	Västmanland	Väst.	Vstm.	U
Kalmar	Kalm.	Kalm.	H	Västra Götaland ^c		Vgöt.	O
Kronoberg	Kron.	Kron.	G	Örebro	Öre.	Öreb.	T
Norrbottn	Norr.	Nbtn.	BD	Östergötland	Ög.	Östg.	E
Skåne ^b		Skån.	M				

^a formerly Kopparberg (Köpp.; 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).

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