

3-1-2002

## My Search for Ångermanland Ancestors in Sweden and America

Bruce William Anderson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Anderson, Bruce William (2002) "My Search for Ångermanland Ancestors in Sweden and America," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 22 : No. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol22/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@augustana.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@augustana.edu).

# 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

---

\* Bruce William Anderson resides at 1213 Lykins Lane, Niles, Michigan, 49120. E-mail address: <andersbj@mindspring.com>

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.

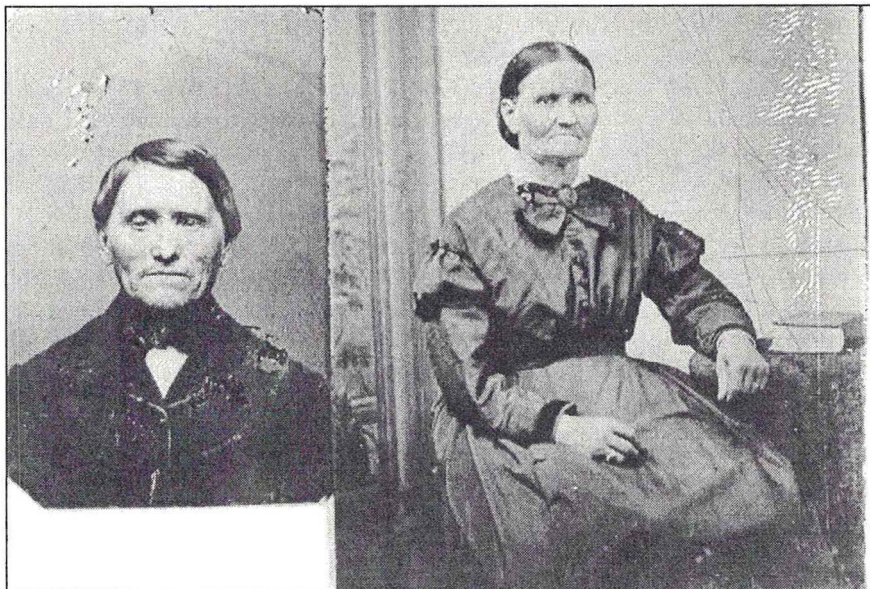
Tracing Nils's movements from farm to farm was also difficult, but I did locate Nils and his future wife, Ingrid Cajsa Isaksdotter, together at a farm (*gård*) Dunderkläpp and sawmill (*sågverk*) Hållänge in Säbrå Parish just prior to their marriage in 1839. It turns out that Ingrid Cajsa was born in 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.<sup>1</sup>

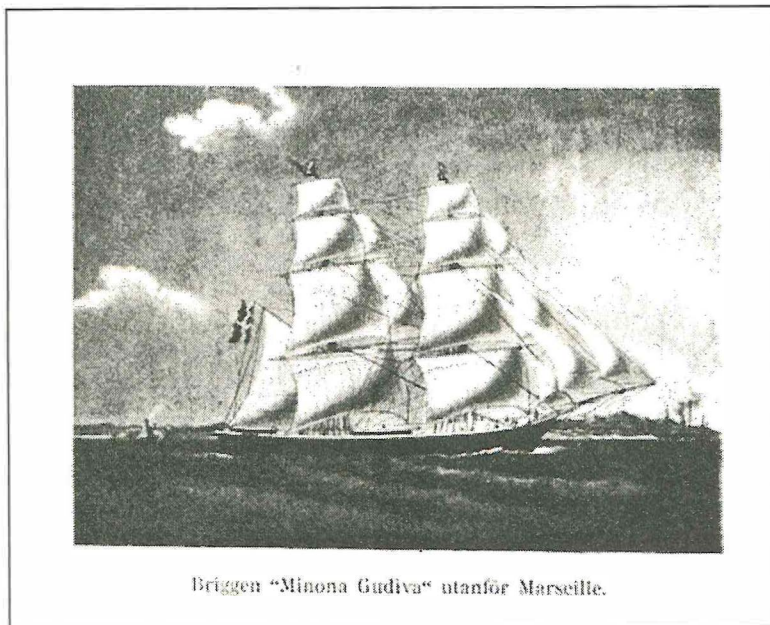
I don't know how the Sjödin's traveled from New York to Chicago, but I suspect that it might have been by passage up the Hudson River to the Erie Canal and through the Great Lakes. This was the route followed by Gustav Unonius and his wife in 1841, when on their way to Pine Lake, Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> *The Swedish Americans* (Chelsea House Publishers, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> 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.



**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."<sup>4</sup> 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.

---

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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...”<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.”<sup>8</sup>

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

---

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

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

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

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

### 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

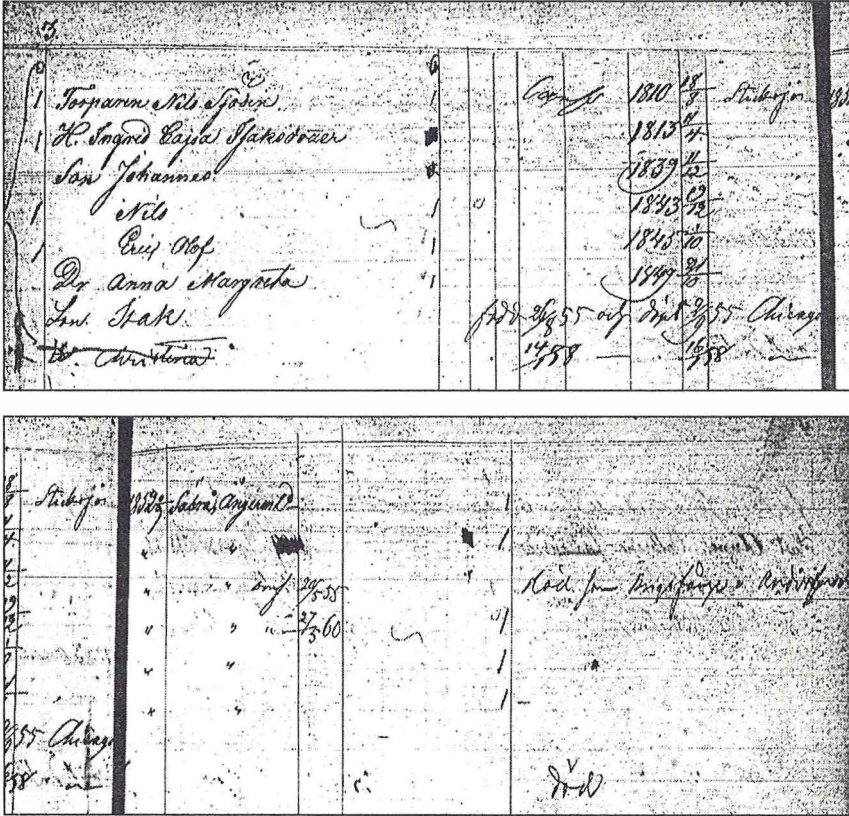
---

<sup>9</sup> Norelius, *The Pioneer Swedish Settlements*.

<sup>10</sup> 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.”<sup>11</sup> 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]); and 3) the notice that son Johannes “Död som krigsfånge i Andersonville” (died when prisoner of war at Andersonville).

<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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".<sup>13</sup> 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

---

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> *Salem Lutheran Church, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1868-1943*.

the church. One person yelled to someone carrying a water bucket, "For God's sake, save the church!"<sup>14</sup> The church was saved and on 29 October 1869 Anna Greta Sjödin (Shaden) was married to Charles G. Anderson by Salem's first pastor, Rev. Hult. Charles, whose given name was Carl Gustaf Ludvig Andersson, was born in the Hallingeberg Parish in Kalmar län in the province of Småland on 8 September 1846, the oldest son of Anders Gustaf Andersson and Karolina Torngren. He is the only one of my six emigrant ancestors who did not change his surname.

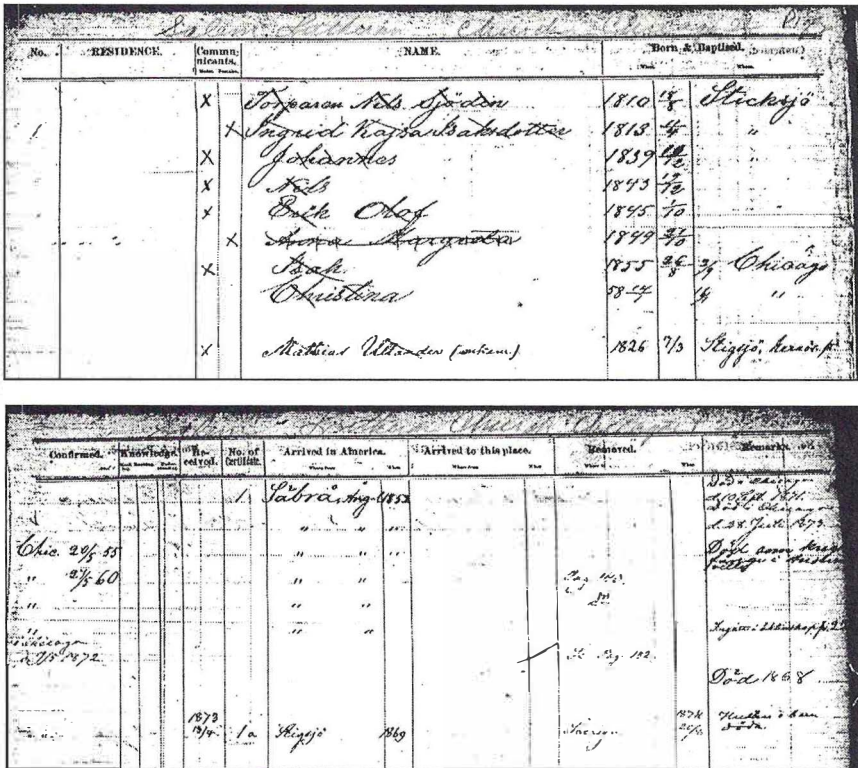


Fig. 4. Portion of a membership record for Salem (Chicago) Lutheran Church on which the Sjödin family members are entered. The top image is the left-hand part of the page; the bottom image, the right-hand part. This record is similar to the Immanuel record (see figure 3) with the exception of the remarks column, which notes the deaths of the following family members: Nils in Chicago on 10 September 1871; Ingrid Kajsa in Chicago on 28 July 1873; Johannes when a prisoner of war in Andersonville; and Christina in 1868.

<sup>14</sup> Salem Lutheran Church, 75<sup>th</sup> 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,<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

### 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.

---

<sup>15</sup> 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.

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

<sup>17</sup> *Salem Lutheran Church, Centennial Anniversary, 1868-1968*.

<sup>18</sup> Kogan and Wendt, *Chicago: A Pictorial History*.

<sup>19</sup> 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 Sjödin<sup>20</sup>**

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

---

<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

Children:

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

---

<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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

---

<sup>22</sup> Sten Thelaus, *Elias Thelaus' förfäder* (Härnösand Landsarkivet).

<sup>23</sup> 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),<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Additional direct ancestors recently defined in footnote 23.