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Finding Anna-Kerstin

George Bernard Hanson*

It was my pleasure in 1979 to meet the Vice Consul for Sweden, Mr. Martin Lakocinski, in Houston, Texas. He explained to me that his family had emigrated from Poland to Lund.

I became serious about genealogy in 1980 and about that time certain articles, including six old photographs from Västerås, Sweden, as well as a more recent picture of a Lucia, were sent to me by my family in Pennsylvania. I remember seeing these items in my home in the 1940s but paid little attention to them. Unfortunately, none of the photographs was labeled.

Eventually I learned that they were sent to my mother, Hildur Berglind, who came to America in 1902 and married my father John Hanson. The people in the photos were related to my mother. On the back of the Lucia picture in my mother's hand was written "Ida's girl." (It was actually Ida Forsberg Eriksson's granddaughter!)

I decided to send these pictures to a newspaper in Sweden, but knew not where. The Vice Consul came to mind as a source for the name and address of a paper in Västerås. I thought they could publish them as a matter of public service and hoped that a positive response from the editor and someone who might recognize them would result.

I sent the following letter to the Vice Consul:

5900 Wurzbach, #106
San Antonio, Texas 78238

Mr. Martin Lakocinski, Vice Consul
Consulate General of Sweden
Houston, Texas

Dear M. Lakocinski

Would you be so kind as to supply me the name of the main newspaper of Västerås, Sweden? I would also need their address.

I have just recently come into possession of 6 photographs taken at several studios in Västerås from about 1895 to 1915 or 1920 of a family and their children (3 generations) whom I believe to be relatives of my mother, who was born in Stockholm in 1881.

* George Bernard Hanson resides at 4243 Blackheath Rd., Dallas, TX 75227. E-mail: <gbh@airmail.net>. Irma Pearson of Irving, Texas, translated the two articles from *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*.

I would like to send these photos to the newspaper in Västerås to see if they might publish them, possibly as a public service, to see if any interest were shown in an effort to identify them.

Thank you very much

Respectfully yours,
George Hanson

The Vice Consul's reply was short and to the point:

Houston, Texas
July 30, 1980

Dear Mr. Hanson:

I would suggest that you write to the following newspaper:

Västmanlands Läns Tidning
Box 3
S-721 03 VÄSTERÅS
Sweden

Wishing you the best of luck in your continued endeavors, I am,

Sincerely yours
Martin Lakocinski

The letter that I subsequently sent to *Västmanlands Läns Tidning* paid great dividends. The newspaper published the following two articles

Västmanlands Läns Tidning, 2 October 1980

A Letter from America:

Does Anyone Know These People from Västerås?¹

The other day we received a letter from San Antonio, Texas. It was signed by George Hanson, which sounds as Swedish as it can be.

And sure it was a Swedish connection, not to say a Västerås connection. Let us tell.

With this letter came several photographs which were taken in Västerås during the years 1895-1920. The photos were taken by Elsie Hirsch (formerly O. Wicklund), Nanna Lundberg, Ernst Tholff, and J. Fredriksson.

These pictures were sent to George's mother, Hildur Berglund, who had married John Hanson in America. Hildur corresponded with Malvina

¹ Originally published in *Västmanlands Läns Tidning*, "Ett brev från Amerika: Känns västeråsarna igen?" Thursday, 2 October 1980.

Forsberg (apparently a cousin) and Ida Eriksson, both from Västerås, a contact that lasted for many years.

Now George Hanson, along with us, wonders who these people are. He also sent along a more recent picture from the late 1930s or early 1940s. The girl in the picture was Lucia in Västerås and on the back of the picture was written "Ida's girl."

"These are pictures of three generations," George writes and he finds them fascinating and of high quality.

So now he is wondering if we at *Västmanlands Läns Tidning* will publish the pictures and hope that some will read this and call us. Naturally, we will publish the photos. Hopefully our readers will let us know.

***Västmanlands Läns Tidning*, 3 October 1980
Västerås-Lucia "Unveiled" /
Said & Done's Whole Family Revealed!²**

Well, it sure went fast, tremendously fast. The ink had hardly dried before *Sagt & Gjort-sidan* got a phone call from a person who knew about everyone in the photographs we received from George Hanson in San Antonio, Texas.

Now, both George and our good readers shall get an answer. Lo and behold it was "Ida's girl" herself who called.

And "Ida's girl," who is pictured as Lucia [see figure 2, photograph #6], lived in Västerås during that time (1940s). Presently she is a homemaker in Fagersta and her name is Anna-Kerstin Ljungqvist, born Bengtsson.

"Hello," says Anna-Kerstin on the phone. "How much fun with these old photographs. It is I who am Lucia. I think it was around 1942 or 1943 when I was honored to be Lucia by The Odd Fellows Ladies Club in Västerås. "Fantastic," we say to Anna-Kerstin, "perhaps you know something about the other, somewhat older photographs?"

"Certainly, I recognize all of them." We were so stunned and surprised here at *S & G* that we almost dropped the telephone, but soon our hand stopped shaking. "You mean you know all of them? How can you do that?"

"Because we are relatives," says Anna-Kerstin without hesitation. Now she tells us about all these people who are in the photos. We take them in order as they appeared in the Thursday paper.

About 1895 [see figure 1, photograph #3]: The older couple is Per Eric Forsberg and his wife, Lovisa, born Björkman. The young girls are their daughters Malvina (on the left) and Ida. Ida married Gustav Eriksson and she became Anna-Kerstin's grandmother.

About 1898 [see figure 1, photograph #2]: Anna-Kerstin's grandmother, Ida, and grandfather, with their oldest daughter, Antonia, who died in 1900 and is buried in the East Church Cemetery in Västerås with her parents.

² Originally published in *Västmanlands Läns Tidning*, "Västerås-Lucia "avslöjar" / *S & G:s hela släktgalleri!*" Friday, 3 October 1980.

About 1903 [see figure 1, photograph #1]: Anna-Kerstin's mother, Anna-Lena, with her sister Märta, who turned 75 last year.

About 1905 [see figure 2, photograph #5]: The sisters again.

The year 1909 [see figure 2, photograph #7]: Anna-Kerstin's mother's parents, Ida and Gustav Eriksson, with daughter, Anna-Lena (Anna Kerstin's mother), who married Bengtsson and Märta, who married Högberg.

Unknown year [see figure 1, photograph #4]: Grandmother Ida Eriksson, born Forsberg.

We are now going to respond to George in Texas and send him copies of the paper and enclose greetings to him from Anna-Kerstin in Fagersta.

It is fantastic that everything is so easy when we work together!

As a result of the publication and the response, I have corresponded with Anna-Kerstin Bengtsson Ljungqvist for twenty-one years and visited her several times in Västerås.

She has researched the family and I began research via Family History Library microfilms from Salt Lake City. She recognized early on that the 5th generation grandmothers were different. Eric Jansson Björkman had two families; the first wife had died.

He first married Anna Ersdotter and had Anders Gustaf Björkman Berglind (he changed his name as a young man) and when Anna died, he married Anna Christina Lundin and had Anna Lovisa Björkman. So Anna-Kerstin and I have the same fifth-generation grandfather but different grandmothers (see simplified pedigree chart below).

oOo

Note that George and Anna-Kerstin are third cousins.

George Bernard Hanson
Hildur Berglind Hanson
Gustaf Theodor Berglind
Anders Gustaf Björkman Berglind
Erik Jansson Björkman and
Anna Ersdotter

Anna-Kerstin Bengtsson Ljungqvist
Anna-L Eriksson Bengtsson
Ida Forsberg Eriksson
Lovisa Björkman Forsberg
Eric Jansson Björkman and
Anna C. Lundin



Fig. 1. Photographs 1 through 4 (clockwise from upper left). See text for details.

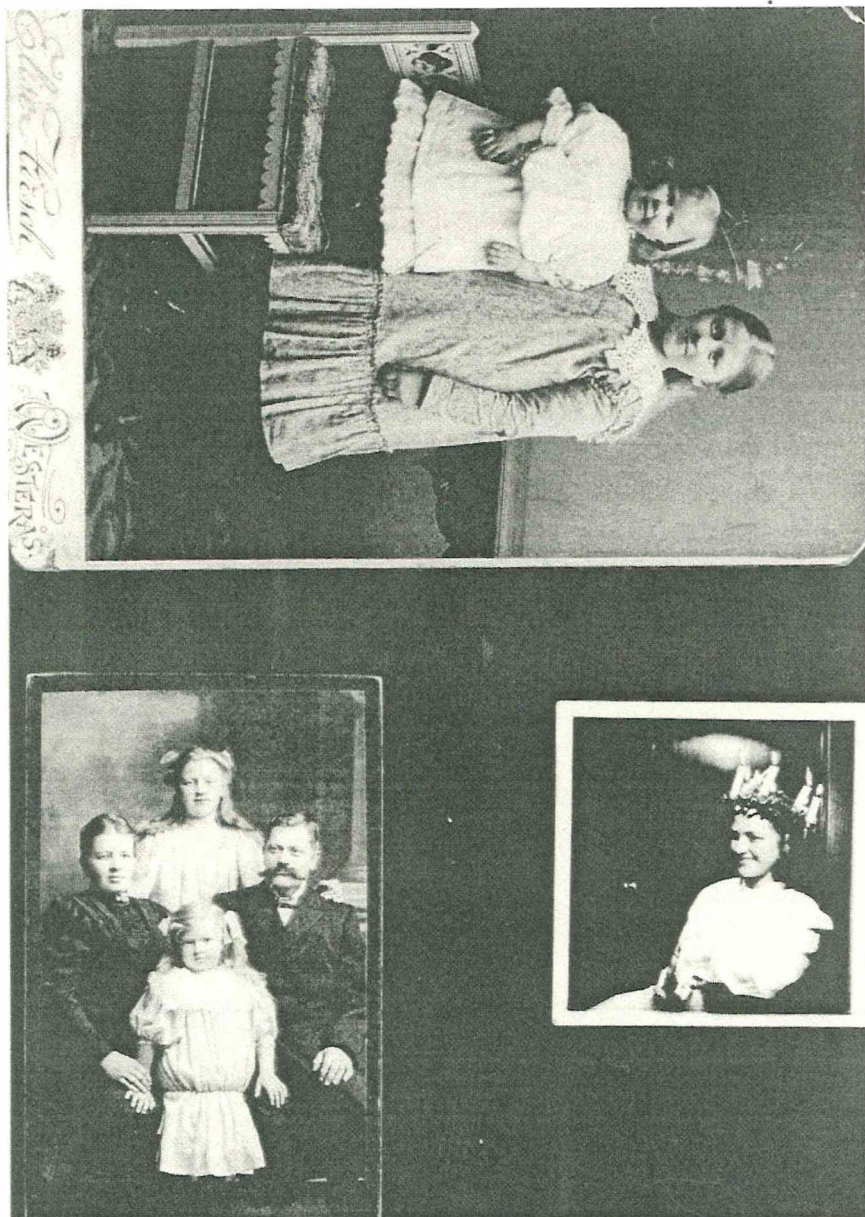


Fig. 2. Photographs 5 through 7 (clockwise from top). See text for details.