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Searching for the Origins of Charles William Brandborg

Ronald J. Johnson*

Comrade Charles William Brandborg, of Henning, Minn., died on March 29 [1916] at his home. – Our comrade leaves a wife and ten children, all of age; eight sons and two daughters. A touching scene during his last hours was the calling of his stalwart sons to his side and urging them to stand by the Red Flag. Until the very last he remained clear of mind, and carried to his grave liberal-minded thoughts. He specially requested that if the family wished services at his grave, the same should be performed by comrades of the Socialist Labor party. Clergymen had not aided his cause during his life and could not consistently say anything for his memory after death. He did not wish the family to hear a preacher confine him to hell, for he was only passing into the eternal sleep after life.¹

The “liberal-minded” and anti-clerical sentiments of Brandborg’s obituary seem a far remove from his confirmation in the Lutheran faith at age nineteen with church membership at the Vista Lutheran Church, Otisco Township, Waseca County, Minnesota.² But his demise as a socialist with a long history of radical activism is an even longer journey from Comrade Brandborg’s alleged origins in the upper classes of Sweden.

Charles W. (Carl Wilhelm) Brandborg (1847-1916) was prominent in radical agrarian politics in northwestern Minnesota at the end of the nineteenth century. After settling near Henning in Otter Tail County in the early 1880s, he became active in township politics and in the Farmers’ Alliance. He joined the Farmers’ Alliance in 1884, serving as its state president, and he founded and owned the *Alliance Advocate*, the first newspaper in Henning. He was active in farmers’ cooperative endeavors, as a director and president of the Parkers Prairie

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¹ Excerpts from “*By a Comrade*,” unattributed obituary clipping in Charles W. Brandborg and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN. Another obituary was published in the *Henning Advocate*, Henning, MN, 30 March 1916, 1.

² Vista Lutheran Church, New Richland, MN, Ministerial Acts 1857-1926 (*Anteckning öfver i Vista Sw. Ev. Luth. Församl. Födde och döpte, intagne, inflyttade, confirmerade, wigde, afflyttade, utstrukne, utslutne, döde och communionantekning [sic] samt en kort historik öfver församlingen*), 90 (Received, 5 January 1867) and 180 (Exited, 5 June 1873); Confirmed at Red Wing, Minnesota, 5 January 1867, according to the Vista Lutheran Church *Kyrkobok*, 49.

Mutual Insurance Company, and as builder of a grain warehouse, which later became the first cooperative farmers' elevator. In 1889 he became a member of the Knights of Labor, an organization subsequently absorbed by the People's Party in 1894. His political activity led to Brandborg standing trial for murder in 1891 after he struck and killed a man in a fracas following a political rally. He was acquitted on the grounds of self-defense.



Fig. 1. The Brandborg Family ca. 1906. Back row (L-R): Harris Augustus, Otto Franklin, Jennie Theresa, Carl Warner, Ellen Benedicta, and Lloyd Nelson. Front row (L-R, including two boys in middle): Guy Matthew, Sten Sture (Stuart S.), Charles William (father), Emmett Tolstoy, Betsy Nelson (mother), and Ralph Vasa. From MHS Collection P632, Box E, The Charles W. Brandborg & Family Papers. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

In 1896 he joined the Socialist Labor Party, and was a candidate for governor of Minnesota on the Socialist Labor platform in 1904 and 1908. He organized the first and only section of the Socialist Labor Party consisting of farmers. He remained a loyal socialist to the end, and several of his ten sons and daughters did indeed remain true to the Red Flag, contributing to the state's

tradition of third-party radicalism as stalwarts of the Socialist Labor Party. One son, Guy M. “Brandy” Brandborg, enjoyed a long career in the U.S. Forest Service, becoming known as “Mr. Conservation” in Montana.³

STATE OF MINNESOTA 10885
 Division of Vital Statistics 10802
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1 PLACE OF DEATH
 County St. Louis
 Township Reming
 or Village
 or City (No. St. Ward)

2 FULL NAME Charles William Brandborg

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS -

3 SEX Male 4 Color or Race White 5 Marital Status Married
 (Write the word) (Write the word)

6 DATE OF BIRTH August 17, 1877
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

7 AGE 68 yrs. 7 mos. 15 da. 1 day. hrs. min. sec.
 (Unless stated otherwise)

8 OCCUPATION Farmer
 (a) Trade, Profession, or particular kind of work. (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer)

9 BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) Sweden

PARENTS

10 Name of Father Henry Brandborg
 11 Birthplace of Father (State or Country) Sweden
 12 Maiden Name of Mother Mathilda Bork
 13 Birthplace of Mother (State or Country) Sweden

14 The above is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
 (Informant) William Brandborg
 (Address) Reming, Minn.

15 Filed 4/3 1916 Edw. Mellstrom Registrar
Reming, Minn. Address

16 DATE OF DEATH March 28, 1916
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from Sept 6, 1915 to March 28, 1916 that I last saw him alive on March 28, 1916 and that death occurred on the date stated above, at 7:30 pm.
 The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:
Myocardial infarction
with history of rheumatic fever
after an attack of bronchitis.
 (Duration) 3 yrs. 0 mos. 0 da.

Contributory (Duration) yrs. mos. da.
 Secondary

(Signed) J. H. Sprague M. D.
 (Address) Reming, Minn.

18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients, or Room Residents) yrs. mos. da. State yrs. mos. da.
 In the death occurred.

19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL St. Louis Cemetery
 ADDRESS St. Louis, Minn.
 20 UNDERTAKER Chas. Young & Son, Reming, Minn.

DATE OF BURIAL Mar 21, 1916

REGISTERED DEATHS

APR 14 1916

TEAR CAREFULLY ALONG PERFORATED LINE
 MARGIN RESERVED FOR BRIDG
 WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD
 READ INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK CAREFULLY
 INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK
 INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK

Fig. 2. Charles William Brandborg’s death certificate. Note that “Sweden” is listed as the birthplace of Charles William and both of his parents, Henry Brandborg and Mathilda Bork.

By all accounts, “Calle” Brandborg was Swedish.⁴ His first appearance in the Minnesota Territorial Census of 1857, as well as all subsequent American

³ “Biographical Sketches” and miscellaneous items in Brandborg Family Papers. C. W. Brandborg’s involvement with the Farmers’ Alliance and his trial are also touched on in Steven J. Keillor, *Cooperative Commonwealth: Co-ops in Rural Minnesota, 1859-1939* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000), 147-150, 170-171.

⁴ Who but an historically-conscious Swede would name one of his sons “Sten Sture” and another “Ralph Vasa”?

census entries, gives his birthplace as Sweden.⁵ The obituary and family sources also place his birth in the province of Halland or at sea while traveling from Halland.⁶ He enters the records of the Vista Lutheran Church as having been born 13 August 1847 in “Slynge, Hall.”⁷

Carl Wilhelm appears in the American records as the son and only child of Henry Brandborg and his wife Mathilda.⁸ The parents did not share the usual peasant background of Swedish settlers in rural Minnesota in the 1850s. Newspaper reports at the time of his murder trial state that “his mother and father were aristocrats in the old country and highly educated”⁹ and “his parents were of the old Swedish nobility and intensely proud.”¹⁰ The family papers note that the “family were ‘landed gentry’ and strictly highclass [*sic*] Swedes if you know what I mean.” Henry Brandborg was said to have been a civil engineer who spoke five or seven languages, while C. W.’s mother was reportedly a member of the landed BJORKE family who married below her station.¹¹ Thus, the radical leftist politician, C. W. Brandborg, appears to be the product of an aristocratic *mésalliance*. That social mismatch may have also led to the displacement of the upper class family as farmers on the Minnesota settlement frontier in the 1850s.

Carl Wilhelm and his mother reportedly came to Minnesota in 1856, via New Orleans, while Henry Brandborg was supposed to have already been in the state for two years.¹² The senior Brandborg is listed as one of the first settlers in Lemond Township, Steele County, Minnesota, in 1857.¹³ The father, “Henri Brandborg,” and son, “Charles Brandborg,” but not the mother, appear in the Territorial Census of 1857 in Lemond Township.¹⁴ “Heinrich Brandberg” also

⁵ 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census, Steele County, Lemond Twp., 261, Dwelling No. 14, Family No. 14.

⁶ “*By a Comrade*” op. cit., “Two notebook papers written by Betsey Brandborg..,” “Pencilled note written by Harris Brandborg..” and R. V. Brandborg to Lucille Kane, Curator, Minnesota Historical Society, 3 March 1964, Brandborg Family Papers.

⁷ Vista Lutheran Church *Kyrkobok*, 49.

⁸ American documents record the surname in many variants including Brandberg, Brandborg, Brandburg, Branberg, Branburg, Brandenburg, and Brandenburg.

⁹ Clipping from a “Waseca Co. Newspaper,” Brandborg Family Papers.

¹⁰ *New Richland North Star*, New Richland, MN, 26 December 1891.

¹¹ Brandborg to Kane, 3 March 1964, citing a family genealogy: “The Brandborgs were people of good education, being masters of three languages, German, English and their native tongue. (I have since learned grandfather was master of five languages). — The BJORKE family was of the landed gentry, which at that time was on the fringe of the nobility on the estate of which she was the heiress. Henry Brandborg was superintendent [*sic*] or manager. It is not clear who married whom, but the result was that she had married below her station, which was a serious faux pas. For this she seems never to have forgiven herself.” - Brandborg Family Papers.

¹² “*By A Comrade*” and Brandborg to Kane, 3 March 1964, Brandborg Family Papers.

¹³ “In 1857, a number of pioneers arrived and located in this township [Lemond Twp., Steele County, MN], among the number being...Mr. Brandenburg..” - *History of Steele and Waseca Counties, Minnesota* (Chicago: Union Publishing Company, 1887), 369.

¹⁴ 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census, Steele County, Lemond Twp., 261, Dwelling No. 14, Family No. 14.

completed a land transaction in Steele County on 29 June 1857.¹⁵ All three members of the “Brandberg” family are recorded at that place in 1860.¹⁶ Beginning with the Minnesota State Census of 1865, Mathilda and Charles have moved to the adjoining township of Otisco in Waseca County.¹⁷ The father is said to have committed suicide in the meantime, it being “the sensation of the year...when he grew despondent over the hardships suffered by Waseca County settlers of [18]56-1858 and destroyed his life.”¹⁸ Unfortunately, the year of the sensation remains unknown, but it was apparently between 1861 and 1865.¹⁹

The widow Brandborg remained in Otisco Township until her death in 1897, having apparently become estranged from her son.²⁰ Carl Wilhelm disappears from the Waseca County census records after 1870. Church records list him on 5 June 1873 in one place as exiting for “Colorado T” and in another as departing for Wisconsin.²¹ The latter is consistent with other accounts that he went to Hudson, Wisconsin, in 1873 and married Betsey Nelson there. In 1881 C. W. Brandborg and his family relocated to Otter Tail County, Minnesota, where he soon commenced his career as a political activist.²²

C. W. Brandborg and his parents are just one of many Swedish immigrant families in Waseca County whose Swedish origins I have sought to document. However, the exceptional and the notorious—“high class” origins, radical politics, suicide, and homicide—make them stand apart and lend a special interest to the search. That search has thus far been tantalizing, but the subjects have been elusive and the findings have been both surprising and inconclusive.

The American records do not give many clues to the identity of the father, Henry Brandborg. We have only his name, ethnicity, and age, which is given as forty in the census of 1857 as well as that of 1860. Thus, it appears he was born around 1817 to 1820. The family papers say that he was the manager of an estate and from a military family: “The first Brandborg of whom we have knowledge was a German officer in the Protestant army in the Thirty Years’ War, who immigrated to Sweden with the returning army in 1650. Also Henry Brandborg (Charles’ father) was a civil engineer, which would indicate his was of a military

¹⁵ Abstract of Deeds, vol. 1, p. 230, line 11. Steele County Land Records, Steele County Court House, Owatonna, MN.

¹⁶ 1860 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Steele County, Lemond Twp., 266, lines 32-34, Dwelling No. 188, Family No. 177.

¹⁷ 1865 Minnesota State Census, Waseca County, Otisco Twp., Dwelling No. 16.

¹⁸ Clipping from a “Waseca Co. Newspaper,” Brandborg Family Papers.

¹⁹ Heinrich and Mathilda Brandborg recorded a deed on 27 April 1861 in Steele County; Charles W. was said to be sixteen years old at the time of his father’s death, which would be about 1863. The suicide was “nearly thirty years ago” according to the *New Richland North Star*, 26 December 1891.

²⁰ “Old Mrs. Brandborg has had a spite against Charles, her wealthy son, for a great many years and although he has repeatedly offered her money, would not accept it, preferring to be a pauper.” - *New Richland North Star*, 26 December 1891. The widow, Mathilda Brandberg, aged seventy-three, born in Sweden, died 23 July 1897 in Otisco Township, Waseca County, MN. - Waseca County Deaths, Waseca County Courthouse, Waseca, MN, Book A, 153, line 10.

²¹ Vista Lutheran Church *Kyrkobok*, 49; Ministerial Acts, 180.

²² “By a Comrade” op. cit.

education too.”²³

For Mathilda Brandborg, American records also provide name, ethnicity, and approximate age. Born in Sweden, she was listed as thirty-five years of age in 1860, forty-five in 1870, fifty in 1875, fifty-four in 1880, sixty-two in 1885, and seventy-two in 1895.²⁴ When she died in 1897, her age was recorded as seventy-three.²⁵ Thus, she seems to have been born around 1823 to 1826 in Sweden. Family sources give her surname as “Bjorke,” and her full name as “Danetta (Danetha?) Fredrica Matilda Borgen” or “Mathilda Dorothea Frederika Borden.”²⁶

Since the information about the parents in the American sources is not very specific, the link for tracing this family back to Sweden is the birthdate and location cited above from the Vista Lutheran Church for Carl Wilhelm Brandborg: 13 August 1847 in “Slynge, Hall.” “Slynge” is Slöinge Parish in Halland. However, no such birth is recorded in Slöinge. Instead, the moving records reveal that *Demois[elle]* (Miss) Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea Bök and *Gossen* (boy) Carl Wilhelm Bök came to Bergagård, Slöinge Parish in 1850. She was born 17 July 1823 in “AltenCrempe” and her parents were Josias August Bök, smith at Jarkau estate, and Ida Margaretha Ficker. She came from an unidentified (*obestämd*) location, “most recently from Warberg [Varberg, Hall.]” Carl Wilhelm was born 13 August 1847 and baptized 15 August 1847 at Trinitatis church in Copenhagen. His father is said to be (*säges vara*) Carl Werner and his mother is said to be Henriette Bök. Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea Bök’s moving certificate was dated at Altenkrempe, Holstein, 26 April 1847. The boy’s certificate is from Landskrona (Skån.), dated 24 August 1849, and bears the faint notation “*fosterson hos mamsell Mathilda Bök*” (“foster son at Mademoiselle Mathilda Bök’s”).²⁷ Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea and Carl Wilhelm Bök appear in the Household Examination Roll at Bergagård, with entry in 1850 and an exit notation for her (only) as “*ovisst 60*” (“unknown [destination], 1860”).²⁸

²³ Brandborg to Kane, 3 March 1964, citing a genealogy prepared by (Carl) Warner Brandborg, Brandborg Family Papers.

²⁴ 1860 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Steele Co., Lemond Twp., Dwelling No. 188, Family No. 177; 1870 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Waseca Co., Otisco Twp., Dwelling No. 16; 1875 Minnesota Census, Waseca Co., Otisco Twp., Family No. 46; 1880 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Otisco Twp., Dwelling No. 92; 1885 Minnesota Census, Waseca Co., Otisco Twp., Family No. 33; 1895 Minnesota Census, Waseca Co., Otisco Twp., Family No. 145.

²⁵ Waseca County Deaths, op. cit.

²⁶ Brandborg to Kane, 3 March 1964; Betsey Brandborg note, Harris Brandborg, in Brandborg Family Papers.

²⁷ Moving Record (*In- och Utflyttningslängd*), Slöinge (Hall.), 1847-1885, Moving In (*Inflyttade*), 1850, Nos. 1 & 2; Moving Certificates (*Inflyttningsattester*), 1830-1859. Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea Bök’s certificate from Altenkrempe is in German.

²⁸ Household Examination Roll (*Husförhörslängd*) (hereafter HER), Slöinge (Hall.), 1851-1860, p. 124.

Danish records confirm the birth of “Carl Wilhelm Börck” in Copenhagen, where his mother is listed as the unmarried young lady (*og. fruntimmer*) Henriette Börck and the father is reputed to be (*angives*) Carl Werner.²⁹ German records from Altenkrempe in Holstein verify the birth of Friederika Mathilda Dorothea Börk at Jarkau estate. She had two siblings, Elisabeth Johanna Carolina and Johann Jochim August. Her forbears were solidly artisans in class: her father, Josias August Börk, was a smith, the son of Jochim Hinrich Börk, toolmaker or watchmaker, and his wife, Elisabeth Dorothea, the daughter of Hans Jürgen Prüß, mason. Josias Börk’s wife, Ida Margaretha, was the daughter of a shoemaker, Jürgen Samuel Fick.³⁰

317	13 August	Carl Wilhelm Börck	15 August 1847	Baptiz. Henriette, og. fruntimmer, d. d. angives Carl Werner 169 Laadamar.
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Fig. 4. Birth entry from Trinitatis church, Copenhagen, for C. W. Börck (Brandborg). Translation: [number] 317 / [born] 13 August / [child’s name] Carl Wilhelm Börck / [baptized] 15 August 1847 / [mother] Börck, Henriette, unmarried young lady; father reported to be Carl Werner; 169 Laadamarck.

Mathilda Dorothea Börk’s whereabouts are not documented between her confirmation in Altenkrempe in 1838 and her moving certificate of April 1847 from Altenkrempe, and again between that date and her appearance in Slöinge Parish in 1850.³¹ I have found Carl Wilhelm Börk only once in Swedish records, in Slöinge in 1850, as noted above, with the August 1849 certificate from Landskrona. There is no exit record for either from Slöinge, but *mamsell* Mathilda Börck, age thirty-three, is listed in emigration records as departing Slöinge for Germany in 1856.³² Here my findings end until “Charles Brandborg” appears with “Henri Brandborg” in the 1857 Minnesota census and “Mathilda Brandberg” is listed with them in the 1860 census entry.

²⁹ Baptisms, Trinitatis kirke, Copenhagen, Denmark: Boys, 1841-1848, No. 317.

³⁰ Extracts from the baptismal, death, and marriage registers of the evangelical Lutheran congregation of Altenkrempe: Baptisms, *Auszug aus dem Taufregister der evang.-luth. Kirchengemeinde Altenkrempe*, 1823, p. 146, No. 99; 1818, p. 7, No. 49c; 1821, p. 79, No. 60; 1782, p. 327, No. 60. Deaths, *Auszug aus dem Totenregister der evang.-luth. Kirchengemeinde Altenkrempe*, 1806, p. 51, No. 21; 1830, p. 459, No. 23. Marriage, *Auszug aus dem Trauregister der evang.-luth. Kirchengemeinde Altenkrempe*, 1816, p. 358, No. 3. Extracts provided by the *Kirchenbuchamt des Kirchenkreises Oldenburg/H. 2430 Neustadt in Holstein*.

³¹ Her confirmation date is in the Moving Certificate of 26 April 1847 from Altenkrempe, op. cit.

³² List of Emigrants, 1856-1860, city of Stockholm through Norrbotten County (*Nominativa uppgifter från länsstyrelserna angående emigranter 2. 1856-1860*), 1856, Halmstads fögderi, Årstads härad (Hall.). Index to Central Statistical Bureau’s Emigrant Lists (*Personregister till Statistiska Centralbyråns i Stockholm förteckningar över emigranter*), 1851-1860, A 118:320.

Returning to the *paterfamilias*, I have not found an exit for a Brandborg to America in the early 1850s in Swedish records, nor is Henry Brandborg recorded in passenger arrivals for New Orleans or New York during this period.³³ However, in the exit records for the port city of Trelleborg in Skåne, I came across “*Bokh[ållare]* Hend. Brandberg,” born 1817 in Halland, returning in 1839 to Färlöv Parish (Skån.) from whence he had come in 1838.³⁴ Hendrik Brandberg was born 25 September 1817 in Asige Parish (Hall.) to the under-officer (*Fanjunkare*) Anders Gustaf Brandberg of the Halland Royal Infantry Battalion and Elna Mårtensdotter.³⁵ Anders Gustaf Brandberg, born 4 December 1796, was the son of Quartermaster Johan Brandberg of Knobesholm estate (*herrgård*) in Asige Parish (Hall.).³⁶ Anders Gustaf Brandberg moved within the parish from Knobesholm to Björsgård as “Regiment’s Adjutant” in 1818; he and his family moved to Engeltofta estate in Barkåkra Parish (Skån.) in 1828, where he is listed as “*Insp[ektor]* *Fanjunkare]* G. A. Brandb.”³⁷

By 1831, the Anders Gustaf Brandberg family is at Araslöv manor (*säteri*) in Färlöv, and in 1835 the family moved to Harastorp estate, where Anders Gustaf Brandberg was again the estate manager (*Insp[ektor]*). His eldest son, Hendrik Brandberg, left for the city of Simrishamn (Skån.) in 1834 and returned in 1837. In 1838 he exited to Trelleborg as *Ynglingen* (young man) Hendrik Brandberg and returned in 1839 with the occupational title of *Bokhållare*.³⁸ Leaving again the next year, “*Bokhåll.* Henr. Brandberg” entered Abild Parish in Halland on 20 November 1840. Here he appears as a single man from 1840 to 1851 at Hjuleberg *herrgård*. In 1851 he is removed in the records to the “end of the parish” (*socknens slut*), and in 1852 he retrieved his moving certificate and left the parish for an unknown location.³⁹

This is the last record I have found in tracking the moves of Hendrik

³³ Nor have I found Mathilda or Carl Wilhelm Börk in the New Orleans passenger records. The only “Bork” entries indexed for this period are Germans from Prussia in 1854 and 1859. In 1856 only three Swedes arrived in New Orleans, all on one vessel in December. Arrivals for June 1856 are missing except for one passenger list. - Index to Passenger Lists, New Orleans prior to 1900; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, 1820-1902, National Archives Microfilm Copy No. 259, various rolls, 1850-1857 (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, 1947, 1957-1958).

³⁴ Moving Out Record (*Utflyttningslängd*) 1830-1842 for Trelleborg (Skån.). *Bokhållare* translates as bookkeeper, accountant, or clerk.

³⁵ Birth and Christening Record (*Födelse- och Dopplängd*), Asige (Hall.), 1813-1846, b. 25, bapt. 27 Sept. 1817. *Fanjunkare* translates as warrant officer or staff sergeant.

³⁶ HER, Asige (Hall.), 1812-1815, p. 29; 1815-1818, p. 23.

³⁷ HER, Asige (Hall.), 1815-1818, pp. 22, 23; 1821-1823, p. 24; Barkåkra (Skån.), 1826-1831, p. 47. In this instance, *insp[ektor]* is a steward, manager, or superintendent of a rural estate.

³⁸ HER, Färlöv (Hall.), 1831-1836, p. 245; 1836-1841, p. 147. Moving Records (*In- och Utflyttningslängd*), Färlöv: Moving Out 1834 No. 45; Moving In 1837 No. 33, 28 Nov. 1837; Moving Out 1838 No. 1, 2 Jan. 1838; Moving In 1839 No. 82, 22 Nov. 1839. As a term of social standing, *Yngling* is here perhaps equivalent to the somewhat archaic English usage of “Master” for young man or boy.

³⁹ Moving Record (*In- och Utflyttningslängd*), Färlöv, 1831-1841: Moving Out 1840, No. 55, 10 Nov. 1840. HER, Abild (Hall.), 1840-1846, p. 1; 1846-1860, pp. 55, 212. Moving Record, Abild, 1840-1860: Moving In, 20 Nov. 1840; Moving Out, 1 Nov. 1852.

Brandberg. I am at the end of the trail and Hendrik is not married, nor is there any documented connection to Carl Wilhelm Börk/Brandborg, born five years earlier, or to Carl Wilhelm's supposed mother, Mathilda.

So we have arrived at the conundrum that for the three-person Swedish family unit recorded in the federal census of Steele County, Minnesota, in 1860, the son seems to have been born in Denmark, the mother's birth is in German-speaking Holstein, the father is not linked to the mother, and the birth record does not show the son to be the offspring of either "parent." I am left not with proof of identity but with the following tentative conclusions, working hypotheses, and questions:

- The Swedish-American Charles W. Brandborg and Carl Wilhelm Börck, born out of wedlock in Copenhagen on 13 August 1847, appear to be the same person. Information in the family papers that Charles W. was born "at sea" may be a veil over the legal status of his birth. Illegitimacy may also be the basis for loss of connection with the ancestral families.⁴⁰
- Charles W.'s mother in the United States, Mathilda Brandborg, born in Sweden, is very likely Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea Börk, born in Altenkrempe, Holstein.
- It is not demonstrated that there is any biological link between Mathilda and Charles. The birth mother, Henriette, could be a relative of Mathilda's, or possibly an alias.⁴¹ Why would a young unmarried lady be living alone with a young foster son? Is "foster son" a polite fiction for Carl Wilhelm's relationship to Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea?
- The father named in Carl Wilhelm's birth record is also unknown. Was Carl Werner a real person or a fictional identity? One assumes it is not coincidental that Carl Wilhelm Brandborg named one of his sons Carl Warner Brandborg.
- Mathilda as a "demoiselle" associated with estates in Halland and Holstein had social standing above that of the peasantry, but her ancestors were craftsmen rather than members of a "Björke" family of landed gentry.

⁴⁰ "Dad had never been taught to work as his grandparents were wealthy and he came to this country at nine years. But his mother having married as she did, they were completely separated from the old country...and believe me, his mother never asked for crumbs. What became of the family in Sweden became history." - "Carl William Brandborg as I remember him" (manuscript found among Jennie Sacriders [daughter of C. W. Brandborg] papers, handwritten [typed and corrected by L. Radov], undated), Brandborg Family Papers.

⁴¹ If Henriette was a relative, she was not a sister of Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea, according to the church record extracts from Altenkrempe cited above.

- Charles W.'s father in America, Henry Brandborg, may possibly be Hendrik Brandberg, born 25 September 1817 in Asige Parish, Halland, but for lack of documentation this is at best a supposition. If Henry Brandborg and Hendrik Brandberg are one and the same, Brandborg family lore is not completely accurate, but does point in the right direction. Hendrik Brandberg was a bookkeeper, not a civil engineer. I have not found him as an estate manager, but he was a bookkeeper on estates, and his father had been an estate manager. Brandberg family origins are again not quite as portrayed in the Brandborg Family Papers, but the family does have a military background. If the Brandborg/Brandberg connection is correct, the American family's aristocratic origins lie here. Hendrik was descended from a prominent family. His grandparents were Quartermaster Johan Brandberg and Dorotea Elisabet von Schantz, daughter of Major Johan Gustaf von Schantz (noble family No. 1255) and Baroness Sabina Dorotea von Blumenthal from Mark-Brandenburg.⁴² In light of this elevated ancestry, one wonders especially what caused Hendrik Brandberg to be relegated in the early 1850s to the end of the parish in the Abild church records with the poor, the infirm, and the missing. The Brandborg Family Papers depict economic decline as the reason for emigration of the Henry Brandborg family, but this description does not comport with the documentation of Hendrik Brandberg's life up to his departure from Abild.⁴³

- I have not found Hendrik Brandberg and Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea Börk in the same place at the same time. Up to four months before the birth of Carl Wilhelm Börk, Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea was apparently in

⁴² "Brandberg" in Karl A. K^{son} Leijonhufvud and Gustaf C^{son} Leijonhufvud, *Ny svensk släktbok* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söners förlag, [1901-1906]), I, 800-810. The genealogical table in this article lists only the birthdate and occupation for Hendrik Brandberg. As Hendrik's parents, Anders Gustaf Brandberg and Elna Mårtensdotter, both died prior to the birth of Charles W. Brandborg and the putative emigration of Hendrik Brandberg, probate records, if available, would not confirm identity with Henry Brandborg.

⁴³ "Father [Charles W.] was the source of the statement that it was common practice to beat the servants, both male and female, for any transgression or mistake. They seemed to have other idiosyncrasies [sic] of this nature, which were not discontinued until they realized that if they expected to have anyone left to do their work it would be necessary to do so as immigration was taking a constantly increasing toll of their labor force. Also the effects of American imports of foods and textiles were beginning to manifest themselves in more supplies, making the gaard (the family farm) less necessary in the economy. -- Although the trend of their income was downward, it did not relieve them of the necessity of maintaining their station by the usual entertainment and travel. The latter was the cause of Charles' birth at sea, but they were prepared for the event since they had a midwife in the entourage. These practices resulted finally in the necessity for releasing their gaard to the 'finance company' and taking off for that wonderful America where land was obtained for the taking and where it would be simple to establish themselves on another gaard." --Brandborg to Kane, 3 March 1964, citing a family genealogy, Brandborg Family Papers. Economic determinism is consistent with the political tradition of the Brandborg family. The alleged impact of emigration on the rural labor force seems premature for the early 1850s.

Altenkrempe in Holstein while Hendrik was registered at Hjuleberg in Abild Parish (Hall.). Shortly after Fredrika Mathilda Dorothea and Carl Wilhelm show up in Slöinge in 1850, Hendrik leaves Abild in 1852. But at this point, they are tantalizingly close, since Abild and Slöinge are only a few kilometers apart in the same district (*härad*) of Årstad.

- No departure or arrival records have been located that prove a link between Sweden and America for any of these three people. It is tempting to make a leap of faith: Hendrik Brandberg disappears from Abild in 1852; Henry Brandborg is supposed to have been in Minnesota by 1854, a gap of only two years. Even closer is Mathilda's departure in 1856, the year she and Carl Wilhelm are supposed to have immigrated to America. But she is going to Germany (*Tyskland*), not America, she is still unmarried, and Carl Wilhelm is not recorded as leaving with her. Her old home in Holstein seems a likely terminus.⁴⁴ Perhaps she emigrated from there, or went to America instead of her stated destination.

Carl Wilhelm Brandborg became one of the subjects of my research in 1975, and I came across the Brandborg Family Papers in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society that same year. At intervals spread throughout three decades, I have returned to the family papers and looked for pieces of the puzzle in newspapers, censuses, land records, probate records, passenger arrivals, emigration records, church records, books, and articles. The key to proving or disproving the relationships of the family members to each other and to Sweden remains elusive. I still have a few leads to follow. Perhaps additional information may come from the Brandberg or Brandborg families, or from readers of this journal. The long search continues.

⁴⁴ Although a duchy under the Danish crown, Holstein was historically German as part of the Holy Roman Empire and was also a member-state in the German Confederation at this time.