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The Clue Was on a Postcard

James E. Erickson

When I first met Joanne Halsey in April of 1997, she told me the fascinating story of her grandmother, Anna G. Johnson Oleson Heightstedt, an early Minneapolis photographer. Although Joanne had compiled some interesting information about Anna from the typical assortment of family documents, she was not confident about the accuracy of the dates she had for Anna's year of birth, year of emigration and year of marriage. More significantly, she had failed to uncover any information concerning Anna's place of birth in Sweden.

I wrote a letter to Joanne in early August 1997 in which I asked her to consider writing an article for *SAG* that would focus on her grandmother—a strong, intelligent, artistic and *female* Swedish immigrant.¹ At the same time I confidently but, in retrospect, naively told her that I was also interested in helping her solve that “little problem” regarding her grandmother's Swedish origins. After all, how hard could it be to positively identify an individual with the name Anna Johnson and an uncertain birth date in the Swedish records? By the end of the month, Joanne and I got together, she provided me all the information she had, and I began my search for Anna.

What follows is a chronological account of my research effort over a one-year period. It is important to remember that this particular quest was never a priority for me but, rather, a peripheral issue that was casually addressed in “fits and starts” as time, circumstances and new leads allowed. In other words, during this period I continued to function as a typical genealogical researcher—juggling a large number of balls (i.e., addressing a number of unrelated research questions/problems) simultaneously.

Lakeland Cemetery, Minneapolis, September 1997

My first step in the search for Anna involved a trip to Lakewood Cemetery, 3600 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis. A brief stop at the main office quickly resulted in a photocopy of the cemetery record associated with the Oleson/Heightstedt family plot. The information it contained, which is summarized in table 1, was significant for several reasons. First, it confirmed that Anna and her entire family—two husbands, three sons, one daughter and one son-in-law—were interred in the family plot. Second, from the age and date of death provided, I calculated Anna's year of birth to be ca. 1859. Third, it raised

¹ Read her account in “Anna Oleson Heightstedt: Early Minneapolis Photographer,” *Swedish American Genealogist*, Vol. XX (June 2000): 88-94.

questions about the identity of three individuals with the surname Johnson buried in the plot. Who were they? The most obvious connection to Anna was the surname Johnson, which was also Anna's maiden name. Was the Jennie G. buried in grave 12 Anna's sister? Were Jeffrey and John her nephews? These were certainly pieces of a larger puzzle, but precisely how they fit together was not yet clear.

Table 1. Individuals interred in the Oleson/Heighstedt family plot at Lakewood Cemetery, Minneapolis.

| Interment Number | Grave | Name | Age | Date of Death | | |
|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------|-----|------|
| | | | | Month | Day | Year |
| 49116 | 1 | Andrew Heighstedt | 75 | Sept. | 25 | 1933 |
| 25984 | 2 | Anna G. Heighstedt | 57 | Oct. | 20 | 1916 |
| 13691 | 3 | Ever W. Oleson | 28 | Dec. | 10 | 1903 |
| 10523 | 4 | *John H. Oleson | 31 | Aug. | 26 | 1881 |
| 10433 | 5 | Gustave H. Oleson | | Apr. | 24 | 1899 |
| 10524 | 6 | *Albert J. Oleson | 1 3/4 | June | 30 | 1881 |
| 87165 | 8 | Clyde Albert Undine | 73 | Aug. | 20 | 1959 |
| 132279 | 9 | Effie H. Undine | 93 | Nov. | 12 | 1983 |
| 50186 | 12 | ®Jennie G. Johnson | 64 | Aug. | 12 | 1934 |
| 29536 | 13 | Jeffery Johnson | 26 | May | 29 | 1919 |
| 16046 | 14 | John E. E. Johnson | 36 | Jan. | 28 | 1907 |

*From Layman's [Cemetery], June 7, 1899

®From Willmar, Minn[esota]

Table 2. Inscriptions on tombstones located in the Oleson/Heighstedt family plot at Lakewood Cemetery, Minneapolis.

| Grave | Name | Died | Aged |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Andrew W. Heighstedt | Sept. 25, 1933 | 75 Yrs, 9 Ms, 25 Ds |
| 2 | Anna G. Heighstedt | Oct. 20, 1916 | 59 Yrs, 11 Ms, 13 Ds |
| 3 | Ever W. Oleson | Dec. 10, 1903 | 28 Yrs |
| 4 | John H. Oleson | August 26, 1881 | 31 Yrs, 13 Ds |
| 5 | Gustave H. Oleson | April 24, 1899 | 21 Yrs, 3 Ms, 24 Ds |
| 6 | Albert J. Oleson | June 30, 1881 | 1 Yr, 9Ms, 22 Ds |
| 8 | Clyde A. Undine, M.D. | Aug. 20, 1959 | 73 Yrs, 5 Ms, 20 Ds |
| 9 | Effie H. Undine | Nov. 12, 1983 | 93 Yrs, 4 Ms, 31 Ds |

Note: The main stone located in the middle of the plot contains the following two inscriptions: *On the west side of the stone:* OLESON / At Rest / John H. Oleson / BORN Aug. 13, 1850 / DIED Aug. 26, 1881; *On the east side of the stone:* Asleep in Jesus / Albert J. Oleson / BORN Sept. 8, 1879 / DIED June 30, 1881.

I then went out to the actual gravesites, where I collected additional information from the tombstones (see table 2). Anna's precise age at death was listed as 59 years, 11 months and 13 days, and from this information an exact date of birth of 2 November 1856 was calculated. Unfortunately, this did not jibe with the year of birth calculated from the information contained in table 1. Which year of birth—1856 or 1859—was correct?

American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, October 1997

In an ideal world, this would have been my first stop, because the ASI archives has microfilm copies of the records of Swedish American churches in Minnesota. I was led to believe that Anna was a member of and/or attended Augustana Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. If I could locate her in one of Augustana's membership registers, I might be fortunate enough to see her birth date, birthplace and year of emigration listed. Unfortunately, my efforts to locate Anna in the Augustana records proved fruitless. What a disappointment to come up empty-handed on the most promising lead! What other records could be searched? The obvious answer was public records. That made my next stop the Minnesota History Center.

Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, February 1998

I first located all relevant obituaries of family members in Minneapolis newspapers. As can be seen in the three included below, neither Anna's obituary nor those of her two husbands provided any additional useful information.

- The funeral of **John H. Oleson**, who died yesterday of typhoid fever, will occur tomorrow from the family residence, corner of Ninth Avenue South and Seventeenth Street, at 2 o'clock p.m.³

- **Heighstedt, Anna G.**, wife of A. W. Heighstedt, died Oct. 20 at the home, 1702 Elliot Av. Survived by husband and a daughter, Effie. Funeral private, Monday, 2:30 p.m. from the residence. Interment Lakewood, by auto. Please omit flowers.⁴

- **Heighstedt, Andrew William**. At the home of his daughter, Mrs. Clyde A. Undine, 3959 Lyndale Av. N. Funeral services will be held at Lakewood chapel Thursday at 12:45. Arrangement by Davies.⁵

³ *Minneapolis Journal*, 27 August 1881, Obituary, 4.

⁴ *Minneapolis Tribune*, 22 October 1916, Want Ads, 1.

⁵ *Minneapolis Journal*, 26 September 1933, Obituary Notices, 24.

Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in locating an obituary for Jennie G. Johnson, who had presumably died in Willmar, MN (see note at the bottom of table 1). The bottom line: the obituaries proved to be a dead end.

Family members were then traced in Minneapolis City Directories starting in 1881. The names, occupations, work addresses and residence addresses that they contained corroborated the basic family story told by Joanne Halsey,⁵ but shed no new light on the question of Anna's origins.

Finally, I turned my attention to information in state and federal census records, which proved to be valuable for two main reasons—the birth date of November 1856 was corroborated and an emigration date of 1869 was established. The pertinent information on Anna contained in three selected federal census records is summarized below:

- **1880 U.S. Census:** 1606 Sixth Street South; Olson, Annie G.; white; female; age 25; married; occupation, keeps house; birthplace, Sweden; father's birthplace, Sweden; mother's birthplace, Sweden.⁶

- **1900 U.S. Census:** 1702 9th Avenue South; Heightstedt, Annie J. [*sic*]; wife; white; female; born, Nov. 1856; age, 43; married, 11 years; mother of how many children, 4; number of living children, 2; birthplace, Sweden; father's birthplace, Sweden; mother's birthplace, Sweden; year of immigration, 1869; number of years in the U.S., 31; can read, yes; can write, yes; can speak English, yes.⁷

- **1910 U.S. Census:** 1702 Elliott Avenue South; Heighstedt, Anna G.; wife; female; white; age, 53; married (2nd), 20 years; mother of how many children, 4; number of living children, 1; birthplace, Sweden; father's birthplace, Sweden; mother's birthplace, Sweden; year of immigration, 1869; able to speak English, yes; occupation, none.⁸

The Impasse

At this point I took stock of my research effort. I felt confident about the veracity of the following five pieces of information: 1) Anna's middle name started with the letter G, or possibly J; 2) Anna's maiden name was Johnson, or some variation thereof; 3) Anna was born in Sweden on 2 November 1856; 4)

⁵ Joanne Halsey, "Anna Oleson Heightstedt: Early Minneapolis Photographer," *Swedish American Genealogist*, Vol. XX (June 2000): 88-94.

⁶ 1880 U.S. Census, roll 622 (Minnesota Historical Society, hereafter MHS), Hennepin Co., Minneapolis, Ward 5, Enumeration District (hereafter ED) 251, p. 437, No. 35.

⁷ 1900 U.S. Census, roll 767 (MHS), Hennepin Co., Minneapolis, Ward 5, ED 62, p. 121B, No. 62.

⁸ 1910 U.S. Census, roll 702 (MHS), Hennepin Co., Minneapolis, Ward 5, ED 103, p. 152, No. 36.

Anna emigrated from Sweden in 1869; and 5) Anna probably had a sister, Jennie G. Johnson, who also emigrated from Sweden. However, in spite of the progress I had made, my goal to bridge the Atlantic and identify “my” Anna in the Swedish records remained an unrealized one. I had to admit that I was at an impasse!

The Postcard

Some time during late spring of 1998, I received a phone call from Joanne Halsey. She had been going through some of her grandmother’s (i.e., Anna’s) “stuff” and had uncovered two postcards with photographs and Swedish writing. She asked if I would like to see them. Naturally, I said “Yes!”

One of the postcards (see figure 1) depicts thirteen individuals in front of two Swedish farmhouses. Six of the individuals are clearly in a group in the foreground (two seated and four standing) and the remaining seven are standing in a row behind them. The text on the back of the postcard read as follows:

- Transliteration: *Detta p[ost]kort / är Skjömilla / Frun å Jonson / Signe å Alfild / det husbondefolk / som mama å papa / bott i 15 år.*
- Translation: This postcard / is Skjömilla / Mrs. and Jonson / Signe and Alfild / the master and mistress / with whom mama and papa / lived for fifteen years.

Who wrote the postcard? Anna? Her presumed sister, Jennie G.? Other siblings who had not emigrated? I had a feeling that Skjömilla and the four individuals pictured in the photograph were somehow connected with Anna, but would this new clue turn out to be the missing piece of the puzzle I was trying to assemble?

The first order of business was to find out more information about Skjömilla. To my surprise and delight, there were only two places with that name in all of Sweden. They were described as follows:¹⁰

- *Sjömīlan. Gård med qvarn och såg i Stenberga s[ocke]n, Östra h[ära]d, Jönköpings län.* (Translation: Farm/estate with flour mill and saw[mill] in Stenberga Parish, Östra District, Jönköping County.)
- *Skjömīllan. By i Åsheda s[ocke]n, Uppvidinge h[ära]d, Kronobergs län, vid sjöarne Ljufven och Källesjön.* (Translation: Village in Åseda Parish, Uppvidinge District, Kronoberg County, by the lakes Ljufven and Källesjön.)

¹⁰ C. M. Rosenberg, *Geografiskt—statistiskt handlexikon öfver Sverige*, (Stockholm, 1883; reprint, Göteborg, 1993), 3:529, 530.

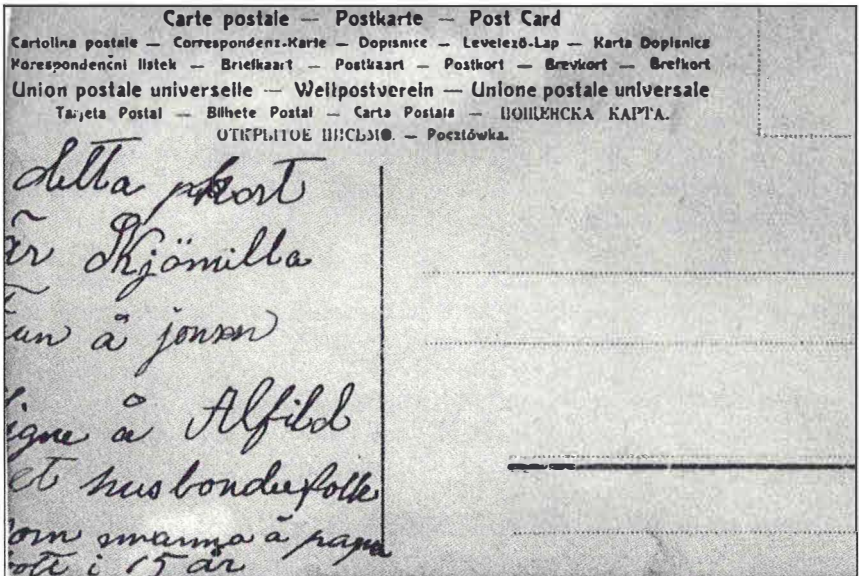


Fig. 1. The postcard on which the name Skjömilla was written. See text for a transliteration and translation of the writing. The edge of the postcard has obviously been trimmed, resulting in a loss of some letters in the written text.

I knew that the next time I had access to Swedish parish records and household examination rolls it would be reasonable to search for evidence of Anna and her family in one of these two places. But which one—Stenberga (Smål.) or Åseda (Smål.)? Since the Skjömilla in Stenberga was a farm/estate (as opposed to a village) and Stenberga was the same parish that Anna's second husband's parents came from,¹⁰ I decided that, when the opportunity presented itself, I would begin my search in records from that parish.

Family History Library, Salt Lake City, October 1998

During the eighth annual SAG Genealogical Workshop in Salt Lake City, Utah, I got my chance. Within minutes of entering the Family History Library, I placed a roll of microfilm containing the birth records for Stenberga Parish onto a microfilm reader. I knew that the odds of finding Anna's birth record in Stenberga Parish were slim but, after one year of work and no success, what did I have to lose? The only new lead that I had pointed to the parishes of Stenberga and Åseda. If I struck out in the Stenberga records, I would then try Åseda. If that didn't work, I would be back to square one.

After threading the film, I forwarded it to the year 1856. This took a while since 1856 was near the end of the roll. Then came the moment of truth. The final crank on the handle advanced the film one more page. I was now looking at birth records for October and November 1856. To my utter amazement and absolute delight, the twenty-ninth birth in Stenberga for the year 1856 was an Anna Gustafva born on 2 November to Johan Wilhelm Jonsson and Maria Andersdotter from Lilla Ulfarp (see figure 2).¹¹ A complete transliteration and translation of this record is as follows:

• Transliteration: *[No.] 28, [1856] November, [Födde] 2, [Döpt] 9, Anna Gustafva från Lilla Ulfarp, äkta dotter af Hemmans Eg. [Hemmansägare] Johan Wilhelm Jonsson och dess hustru Maria Andersdotter fr. Lilla Ulfarp. Faddrar: Hemmans Eg. Johannes Jonsson och dess hustru Johanna Kathrina Pehrsondotter i Lilla Ulfarp, Dr[ängen] Karl Joh. Johansson i St[ora] Högarp, Pig[an] Lena Maria Abrahamsdotter i Lilla Ulfarp.*

• Translation: No. 28, [born] 2 November 1856, [baptized] 9 November, Anna Gustafva from Lilla Ulfarp, legitimate daughter of farm owner Johan

¹⁰ Soldat Anders Fredrik Johansson Högstedt, his wife Anna Maria Adamsdotter, and their son Carl Johan emigrated from Stora Högarp, Soldat Torp No. 92, Stora Weta in Stenberga Parish on 2 June 1852 and settled in San Francisco Township, Carver Co., Minnesota. - Household Examination Roll (*Husförhörslängd*), Stenberga Parish (Smål.), AI:11, 1851-1855, 18. See also James E. Erickson, "St. Ansgar's Academy, East Union, MN Students," *Swedish American Genealogist* XV (March 1995): 25, No. 148.

¹¹ Birth Record (*Födde*), Stenberga Parish (Smål.), C:4, 1817-60, No. 29, 2 November 1856.

Wilhelm Jonsson and his wife Maria Andersdotter from Lilla Ulfarp. Godparents: farm owner Johannes Jonsson and his wife Johanna Kathrina Pehrson from Lilla Ulfarp, the farmhand Karl Joh. Johansson from Stora Högarp, [and] the maid Lena Maria Abrahamsdotter from Lilla Ulfarp.



Fig. 2. Birth record of Anna Gustafva Johansdotter. See text for details.

This had to be “my” Anna! Everything fit—the Christian names, the surname and the date of birth were exactly what I expected. To be absolutely sure, however, I had to follow this particular Anna Gustafva through the parish registers and household examination rolls to see if she emigrated in 1869.

I discovered that during the next thirteen years, the Jonsson family resided in three parishes—Stenberga, Virserum and Åseda—but it was the household examination roll from Åseda Parish covering the time period 1867-72 that had the “smoking gun” I had hoped and expected to see (see figure 3).¹² On the left-hand side of the page the family of Arr[endantor] (tenant farmer) Johan Wilhelm Jonsson is listed as living at Borsås Östergård, Borsås Qvarn. Note that the name of Johan’s daughter, Anna Gustafva, is crossed out, which indicates that she is no longer living at home. On the right-hand side of the page a single remark explains where she is. In the column with the heading *Flyttat till* (moved to) is the notation “N[orr]a Amerika, 1869 21/6, [No.] 87.”¹³ This was unquestionably “my” Anna!

¹² Household Examination Roll (*Husförhörslängd*), Åseda Parish (Smål.), AI:24, 184.

¹³ Confirmed in Moving Out Record (*Utflyttningslängd*), Åseda Parish (Smål.), BI:2, 1869, No. 87.

1871 *Bofogel Ödugård*

| Personens namn, titel, embete, yrke och äftingsång, (sackstugt-, inbryes- och fästighlön), nationalitet (om främmande), lyten, (avagelsta, blinda, döfslumma). | Födelse | | Äktenkap | | Flyttad | |
|--|---------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | År. | Mån. och dag. | Ort. (Socken i Län, Stads) | Gift eller Enka. | År (Socks i Län, Stads) | Månad eller dag. (Husförhållande) och dag. |
| <i>Norski Boarn</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>den Jakob Wilhelm Jenafsen</i> | 1854 | 4 | <i>Skottvick</i> | | | |
| <i>W Gustafva Maria Schuster</i> | 1846 | 2 | <i>Skottvick</i> | | <i>Norwegen</i> | <i>1865 22</i> |
| <i>Johanne Gustafson</i> | 1856 | 3 | <i>"</i> | | | |
| <i>Mathilda Sophia</i> | 1857 | 2 | <i>"</i> | | | |
| <i>Anna Gustafva Maria</i> | 1869 | 2 | <i>Norwegen</i> | | | |
| <i>S. Hansen Schmidt +</i> | 1867 | 10 | <i>Norwegen</i> | | | <i>1867</i> |

| Län | Befolkning förhör och begär N. N. Mätvård | | | | | | | | | | Fräjd och särskilda anteckningar | Flyttad till (Socks i Län, Stads) | År. | Månad eller dag. (Husförhållande) och dag. | | |
|-----|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|
| | 1864 | 1865 | 1866 | 1867 | 1868 | 1869 | 1870 | 1871 | 1872 | 1873 | | | | | | |
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Fig. 3. Left-hand (top) and right-hand (bottom) pages from the household examination roll (*husförhörslängd*) from Åseda Parish (1867-72), which document Anna Gustafva's departure for North America in 1869 and her being legally declared dead in 1938.

A second notation on "Anna's line" on the right-hand side of the page, this time in the column with the heading *Fräjd och särskilda anteckningar* (character and special/particular remarks), also proved very interesting. The comment reads as follows: "*Dödförklarad af Uppvidinge H:R [Härads Rätt], d. 19 april 1938*" (Declared dead by Uppvidinge District Court on 19 April 1938). Anna's relatives in Sweden and the Swedish authorities had obviously lost track of her. She had actually died twenty-two years earlier, in 1916! I am also intrigued and fascinated by the fact that someone actually used a record book from the time period 1869-72 to record a notation in the year 1938. Sixty-nine years had passed between the time someone noted Anna's emigration from Sweden and her being legally declared dead!

Although I was confident in my identification of Anna, there were still two loose ends to tie up. One was the true identity of the woman named Jennie G. Johnson buried in the Oleson/Heighstedt plot in Lakeland Cemetery in Minneapolis. Was this Anna's sister? To answer this question I had to continue to "follow" Anna's family in the Swedish records.

Anna's family remained in Åseda Parish after her departure for North America. Here, on 19 June 1870, a daughter named Jenny Gustafva was born into the Jonsson family. The year of birth, the Christian names and the surname were a match. The woman buried in Lakeland Cemetery had to be Anna's younger sister! But did this particular Jenny Gustafva also emigrate?

In April 1878 the Jonsson family returned to Stenberga Parish, where they resided at Skjömilla. In November 1887 they moved to Virserum Parish, where they remained until at least 1895 (the year of the last record currently available on microfilm). In the household examination roll from Virserum Parish covering the years 1887-1895, the following two notations were written about Jenny Gustafva: 1) she emigrated to "*Amerika, 18/5 1888, No. 98*" and 2) "*Dödförklarad d[en] 31/12 1920 g.m. Aspelandes o[ch] Hanbrods Hr:s [Härad rätts], beslut[en] d[en] 18/1 1938*" (Declared dead on 31 December 1920 through Aspelandes and Hanbrods District courts, resolved on 15 January 1938).¹⁴ Although the puzzle was now all but complete, one question still remained. Who exactly were the people in the photograph?

I started with the household examination roll for Stenberga Parish covering the years 1890-95, because it represented the most recent such record available on microfilm and, I guessed, was most closely aligned in terms of time with the postcard in question.

Finding the pages associated with the place Skjömilla was straightforward because there was an index. On page 155 I found what I was looking for—a husband with the surname Jons[s]on, his wife, and two daughters with the Christian names Signe and Alfhild (see figure 4).¹⁵ The names circled on figure 4 match those on the postcard, i.e., "Mrs. and Jonsson, Signe and Alfhild" (see figure 2). This admittedly circumstantial evidence leads me to believe that four of the six individuals in the foreground of the photograph are *Egensman* (= *ägare* = owner) Sven Magnus Jonsson, his wife Anhtelia Theolricka Meurling and their daughters Signe Maria and Alfhild Mariana.

Postscript: Swedish Emigrant Institute, Växjö, Sweden

My search for Anna's Swedish origins, which began in September 1997 and ended in October 1998, had taken me a little over one year to complete. My

¹⁴ Household Examination Roll (*Husförhörslängd*) Virserum Parish (Smål.), AI:27, 1887-1895, 693.

¹⁵ Household Examination Roll (*Husförhörslängd*) Stenberga Parish (Smål.), AI:18, 1886-1891, 155.

research effort did not set any speed records, but I was pleased that I had, indeed, successfully bridged the Atlantic. Success is success, right?

Skjömilla Rote

| Familiens namn, stånd, ombete, yrke och näringslag, (beräknings-, inlysnings- och fattiglag), nationalitet (om främmande), lytan (svagblinda, blinda, dövstumma). | Födelse | | Årtal Ehnl. eller Andra | Hjälps behov | Hittills från (Sveket i Län, Stad eller postort i Högst högskolan) | Ar- mandat och lag. | Andra märken |
|---|---------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------|
| | Ar. | Mån. och dag. | | | | | |
| <i>Mant</i> | | | | | | | |
| 1. <i>Hjälpa Skjömilla, oförnu. i Mant. förm. 4. Mant. bevilja</i> | | | | | | | |
| 2. <i>1 1/2 Equ. Linn Magna Jansson</i> | 1836 | 14 | Kivitsala | 75 1/2 | N | 77 1/2 | 30 |
| 3. <i>H. Anttila Theodora Mursling</i> | 1899 | 27 | Do | 75 1/2 | N | | |
| 4. <i>H. Signe Maria</i> | 1875 | 8 | Do | | N | | |
| 5. <i>H. Knut Ericson</i> | 1877 | 1/2 | Do | | N | | |
| 6. <i>H. Gustaf Erik</i> | 1879 | 23 | Häga | | N | | |
| 7. <i>H. Nyfild Mariana</i> | 1882 | 29 | Do | | N | | |

Fig. 4. Page from the household examination roll (*husförhörlängd*) from Skjömilla in Stenberga Parish covering the time period 1886-1891. Four of the family members listed (Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 7) are most likely the individuals in the foreground in the photograph on the postcard (see figure 1). I have circled the names on this record that also appear on the postcard.

In June 1999, I found myself at the Swedish Emigrant Institute, Växjö, Sweden, working on a new research project—Swede Hollow (Svenska Dalen), St. Paul, MN—for which I had received a stipend. While at the institute, I was able to work with their searchable database called EMIBAS, which contains data (extracted from Swedish parish registers, household examination rolls, and emigration records) for almost one million Swedes who emigrated. It is a powerful research tool that, at the moment, is only available at the institute.¹⁶

One day, for fun, I decided to do a search for “my” Anna in EMIBAS. I already knew the results, of course, but I wanted to see how long it would take the computer to uncover the truth. I typed Anna’s birth date (1856-11-02) into the “Född-datum” field, which is just one of the two dozen fields, and hit the return key. Within seconds, the computer displayed the results of the search—34

¹⁶ See how a Swedish genealogist used EMIBAS in Ted Rosvall, “Olphult? The Sandgren Files. Part 1,” *Swedish American Genealogist* XX (March 2000): 20-22.

individuals with that specific birth date were in the database. I then narrowed the focus of my search by typing the name “Anna G” into the “Förnamn” field and the name “Johansdotter” into the “Efternamn-1” field. After hitting the return key, the results of the search immediately appeared on my computer screen (see figure 5; although the field names are in Swedish, they and the data are more or less self-explanatory). Only one person in the entire database—“my” Anna—had that particular birth date and name!

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FRÅN EMIBAS: ANNA GUSTAFVA JOHANSDOTTER                      99-06-16 Sid.1

Utfl-församl> ÅSEDA                      Destination.> N. AMERIKA
Utfl-datum..> 1869-06-21   Län> G         D-ort/region> .
H-akt /Aktnr> /123          D-Landskod..> .
Efternamn-1.> JOHANSDOTTER      Kön.....> K
Efternamn-2.>                  Ålder.....> 12
Förnamn.....> ANNA GUSTAFVA      Civilstånd..> OG
Gårdsnamn...>                  Ensam/Fam...> E
Titel/Yrke...>                  Född-datum...> 1856-11-02
Husförhåll-sid> 184             Född-förs...> STENBERGA
Utfl-plats..> BORSÅS ÖSTREGÅRD     Född-län....> F
                                      F-ort/stat/region.>
                                      Född-land.....>
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                                      Fri text.> memo
  
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Fig. 5. Printout from EMIBAS when searching just two fields—the birth date 1856-11-02 and the name Anna G. Johansdotter.

The moral of this story is to remember that “there is more than one way to skin a cat.” As computerized indexes and databases become more readily available, it will be to your advantage to utilize them. While they are no substitute to going to the original records at some point in your research,¹⁷ they can certainly be timesavers!

¹⁷ As a reminder about the importance of original records, see Ronald J. Johnson, “Destination: La Brassa. A Research Anecdote from the SAG Workshop in Salt Lake City,” *Swedish American Genealogist* XX (June 2000): 96-100.