Swedish American Genealogist

Volume 20 | Number 2

Article 8

6-1-2000

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Recommended Citation

Erickson, James E. (2000) "Genealogical Workshop," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 20 : No. 2 , Article 8. Available at: https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol20/iss2/8

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Genealogical Workshop

James E. Erickson*

Of the various Swedish court records available to genealogical researchers, the inventories of the estates of deceased persons, or *bouppteckningar*, which are basically equivalent to U.S. probate court records, are among the most important. "At the death of a person a legal inventory and appraisal of the death estate was made, so that it could be properly divided between the heirs. This was done by court appointed appraisers (*värderingsmän*), who turned the list of inventory over to the court for probate, which took place at the next court session. There were held between two and four sessions a year—winter, spring, summer and fall."¹

Ideally, a *bouppteckning* comprises a preamble, a list and appraisal of the estate inventory, a closing statement and a record of how the estate was distributed among the heirs. The three *bouppteckningar* featured below collectively illustrate the typical contents of these documents, such as 1) date of inventory; 2) name, occupation and place of residence of deceased; 3) date of death; 4) spouse's name; 5) name(s), age(s) and occupation(s) of child(ren); 6) name(s) and occupation(s) of in-law(s); 7) name(s) of appraiser(s); 8) list of the estate inventory; 9) value of the estate inventory; and 10) the record of the distribution of the estate. Such information can be invaluable as you try to "flesh out" your family history, for it either enhances, complements or completes the information gleaned from parish registers and the household examination rolls.

To successfully complete the following "assignment"—which involves transliterating and (if necessary) translating each of the three original documents—it will once again be imperative that you have at your disposal the appropriate dictionaries and handbooks.²

Please note that the featured documents represent three different time periods and three different parishes. Also note that they are incomplete as presented. For example, document 1 illustrates only a portion of a preamble written in 1771, whereas documents 2 and 3 each illustrate a preamble and a portion of the list of inventory/appraisal written in 1808 and 1842, respectively.

^{*} Carl-Erik Johansson, the well-known author of *Cradled in Sweden*, kindly gave *SAG* permission to publish material associated with documents 1 and 3, which first appeared in his book *Thus They Wrote: A Guide to the Gothic Script of Scandinavia* (Provo: BYU Press, 1970). Priscilla Sorknes and Elisabeth Thorsell provided the translation of the preamble to document 2. Special thanks to Elisabeth Thorsell and Ted Rosvall for their transliteration skills.

¹ Carl-Erik Johansson, Cradled in Sweden, Rev. Ed. (Logan: The Everton Publishers, 1995), 143.

² For example, Carl-Erik Johansson, *Cradled in Sweden* (1995) or Clemensson and Andersson, *Släktforska: Steg för Steg* (1997).

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Document 1. Preamble of the probate record (*bouppteckning*) of the deceased merchant Nordlin's widow, Merta Netszelia, dated 18 January 1771.

Transliteration of Document 1:

Anno 1771 den 18 Janua[ri] hafwa underteknade efter Wällof[liga] Magistratens anordning följande Inventarium uprättat efter afledne Handelsman Nordlins änka Madame Merta Netszelia som den 12 Junij med döden aflidit, Lemnandes efter sig älsta Sonen Ingenieuren Herr Erick Nordlin, samt andra Sonen Buntmakaren i Stockholm H[er]r Elias Nordlin, dottren Catharina gift med Borgaren H[er]r Jonas Edsberg ifrån Sundsvall, dottren Cristina gift med Fabriqeuren och Linwäfwaren Herr Isac Sellstedt, närwarande å egen och H[er]r Elias Nordlins wängnar war H[er]r Ingenieuren Nordlin, samt å des Hustrus wängnar H[er]r Jöran [sic] Edsberg, jämte H[er]r Isac Sellstedt och des hustru, som haft egendommen under sin wård, hwilka förmantes om des riktiga upgifwande enligit Lag, sedan företogs som följer.

Translation of Document 1:

In the year 1771 on 18 January the undersigned have according to the order of the worthy Magistrate made the following inventory after the deceased merchant Nordlin's widow Mrs. Merta Netszelia, who on 12 June succumbed to death, leaving behind the oldest son, the Engineer, Mr. Erick Nordlin, and the second son. the Furrier in Stockholm Mr. Elias Nordlin, the daughter Catharina married to the Burgher Mr. Jonas Edsberg from Sundsvall, the daughter Cristina married to the Manufacturer and Linenweaver Mr. Isac Sellstedt. Present on his own and Mr. Elias Nordlin's behalf was Mr. Engineer Nordlin, and Mr. Jöran Edsberg on behalf of his wife, also Mr. Isac Sellstedt and his wife who have had the property in their care, who were admonished to declare its correct content according to law. Then proceeded as follows:

416 9 nou. and fill

Document 2. Portion of the probate record (*bouppteckning*) of Ola Bengtsson's deceased wife, Ellna Sonasdotter, from Ivetofta (Skåne) dated 11 July 1808.

Transliteration of Document 2:

Åhr 1808 den 11te Julii Förrättades Boupteckning efter Åboen Ola Bengtssons afl[iden] Hustru Ellna Sonasdoter på Nummer 11. Ifvetofta, som sistl[iden] Martii månad med döden bortgådt och utom Encklingen efter sig lemnat 5 st[ycken] Barn sonen Anders 8. år, döttrarne Kjersti 19. år, Olu 17. år, Karna 14. år, och Bengta 12. år, hwarwid sig infinnas som förmyndare Åboen Bengt Larsson i Allarp— Enklingen förmantes at Boets tillstånd redeligen upgifwa, hvarefter fölljande förevistes som värderade af Nämmedemannen Jöns Jönsson och kronofjerdingsmannen Påhl Månsson här af Byen—

						Lotten	Lotten	
		Värde	Gra-	Gåfvor	Enck-	N.1	N.2	Lotten
		Summa	va-	till	lingens	Enck-	Enck-	N.3
Silfver		Banco	tioner	Barnen	Fördel	lingen	lingen	Barnen
Polerad Bägare 8 lod ³ gifwen								
till dotter Kjersti	4			4				
wäger 6 lod å 24 sk	3					3		
wäger 5 lod gifwen till								
dotteren Olu	2.24			2.24				
wäger 3 lod	1.24						1.24	
wäger 3 1/2 lod	1.36							1.36
Stop, wäger 1 1/2 lod	.36						0.36	
Tumlare, wäg[er] 1 1/2 lod	.36							0.36
Skjed, wäg[er] 3 lod	1.24							1.24
dito wäg[er] 1 1/2 lod	.36					0.36		
*ding	3						3	
med länck gifven till dotte								
ren Karna	1			1				
*med dito gifvet till dottren Bengta	1			1				
utom länck med löf och (?)								
maljor gifvet till dotter Olu	1			1				
Silfver gifvet ill dott[er] Kjersti	2	24.24		2				
Ten								

³ Note: 1 lod = 13.28 grams. - Johansson, Cradled in Sweden, 218.

Translation of Document 2:

In the year 1808 on [the] 11th of July was conducted probate for Åbo (farmer/lease holder) Ola Bengtsson's deceased wife Ellna Sonasdotter at [farm] number 11. in Ivetofta [Parish], who [in the] previous month of March died and in addition to the widower left after herself 5 [*stycken* = literally items/pieces] children: the son Anders 8. years, daughters Kjersti 19. years, Olu 17. years, Karna 14. years, and Bengta 12. years, at which appeared the guardian Åbo (farmer/lease holder) Bengt Larsson in [the village of] Allarp— The widower was exhorted to honestly report the condition of the personal property, after which the following was exhibited as appraised by Juryman Jöns Jönsson and constable

Påhl Månsson of this village ----

					To the	Portion	Portion	Portion
		Total	En-	Gifts	benefit	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
		sum of	cum-	to the	of the	to the	to the	to the
Silver		money	brances	children	widower	widower	widower	children
Polished chalice, 8 lod given								
to daughter Kjersti	4			4				
weight 6 lod å 24 sk	3					3		
ditto, weight 5 lod given to								
the daughter Olu	2.24			2.24				
weight 3 lod	1.24						1.24	
weight 3 1/2 lod	1.36							1.36
Pot, weight 1 1/2 lod	.36						0.36	
Tumbler, weight 1 1/2 lod	.36							0.36
Spoon, weight 3 lod	1.24							1.24
ditto weight 1 1/2 lod	.36					0.36		
*ding	3						3	
with chain given to daughter								
Karna	1			1				
ditto given to dau. Bengta	1			1				
except chain with leaf and (?)							
*aljor given to dau. Olu	1			1				
Silver given to dau. Kjersti	2	24.24		2				
Pewter								

Ar 1842 den 4 September, bleg anmodan (attad efter afledne Undame ningition Jainiger, tides Bellersde nora he ansoluder llon ochie Ha " lekoren ha dente testamente a oljande, Ald ndantag 21 minicor 0.0 val. Salle 1. 11as & Sonselain Sun och sturk 2222 Till itt an the fatimed Bko 1 2/2 NI 1 The nar 90 (Im abiHusan 5

Document 3. Portion of the probate record (*bouppteckning*) of Sven Jönsson from Tunge (Västergötland) dated 4 September 1842.

Transliteration of Document 3:

År 1842 den 4 September, blef på anmodan Bouptekning förrättad efter afledne Undantagsmannen Sven Jönsson under Tunge, som med döden afled den 31 Augustii innevarande år, och efterlemnadt dess Hustru Enkan Anna Pettersdotter; och voro tillstädes Nämndemannen Sven Håkansson i Tunge och Lars Andersson i Elekärr, hvilka biträdde undertecknad Bouptekningsman.— Enkan som var försedd med Testamente af den afledne Makan, upgaf Egendomen i följande Ordning:—

-	Danco		Danco
	Banco		Banco
<u>Undantags Jord</u>	<u>RDsr</u> ⁴	Transport R	D 253 25 4
Enligt Undantags Hand-		1 St[ycke]:	
ling af den 9 Julij 1825 uplyses		Then	
arr Enkan skall åtnjuta un-		1 Drecks stop	36
dantags jorden, med dervarande		1 Tallrik	12
Mannhus och Ladugård uti		Glas & Porselain	
Sin och efterkommande arf-		2nd halfstops flasker & 1 Glas	18
vingars lifstid. Uptages		1 Stop Bouteille	4
till ett värde af	222 21 4	1 St[ycke]: sämre Porsellainsfa	at 12
Silfver		5 st[ycke]: Flata Tallrikar	20
1 Krage Knapp	4	5 st[ycke]: The fat med 3 kopp	oar 24
1 Silfver beslagen Pipa	1	Bläck Saker	
Koppar		1 The Bricka	24
1 Dricke Tappe Skål wäg[er] 3 tt ⁵	36	1 d[it]o d[it]o [Trä] Målad	4
1 Sämre Koppar Kettel wäg[er] 15	tt 2 24	<u>Köks och HusgerådsSak</u>	ter
1 d[it]o d[it]o 20 tt a 12	5	1 Liten sämre Gryta	12

⁴ These three abbreviations refer to the following monetary units: $\mathbf{RD} = riksdaler = 48 \ skilling; \mathbf{s} = skilling = 12 \ run(d)stycken; and \mathbf{r} = run(d)stycken.$ - Johansson, Cradled in Sweden, 217.

⁵ This abbreviation represents a unit of weight known as a *skålpund*, which equals 32 *lod* or 0.425 kilos. - Johansson, *Cradled in Sweden*, 218.

In the year 1842 on 4 September was on request inventory taken after the deceased farmer on exemption Sven Jönsson under Tunge, who died 31 August this year and left behind its [his] wife, the widow Anna Pettersdotter: and were present the jury man Sven Håkansson of Tunge and Lars Andersson of Elekärr, who assisted the undersigned appraiser. The widow who had a will of the deceased mate, stated the property in the following order:

Monetary va	alue	Monetar	y value
Exemption Land RD	<u>s r</u>	Balance Rd 25	3 25 4
According to the Exemption docu-		1 Piece:	
ment of 9 July 1825 it was stated		Pewter	
that the widow shall have the use of		1 Drinking cup	36
the exemption land with		1 Plate	12
home and barn in		Glass & China	
her lifetime and that of her		2 Pint bottle & 1 Glass	18
descendants. Appraised		1 Quarter Bottle	4
at a value of 222 2	14	1 Piece: Worn china plate	12
Silver		5 Pieces: Flat plates	20
1 Collar button	4	5 Pieces: Tea plates with 3 cups	24
1 Silver coated pipe 1		Tin Items	
Copper		1 Tea tray	24
1 Drinking tap bowl weighing 3 tt 30	6	1 ditto ditto [Wood] Painted	4
1 Worn copper kettle weighing 15 tt 2 24	4	Kitchen and household utensils	
1 ditto ditto 20 tt a 12 5		1 Small, worn kettle	12