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A Marriage Certificate from the *Bethel* Ship in New York

Erik Wikén*

Sven Werner, works manager (*bruksinspektör*), emigrated to America 1850 from Bjuråker Parish (Gävl.) together with his family and arrived in New York 19 Aug. aboard the vessel *Sophie*.¹ As Nils William Olsson has stated, Werner's daughter Anna Cathrina married the second mate aboard the ship, Bror Carl Svedlund, and subsequently returned to Sweden.

In the District Archives of Härnösand I recently discovered among the parish records of the Holy Trinity Church of Gävle (*Trefaldighetsförsamlingen*) with the signum H V:12 two documents which have a direct bearing on the Svedlund marriage. One of these is a marriage certificate made out by the Methodist pastor aboard the *Bethel* Ship in the harbor of New York, Olof Gustaf Hedström² dealing with the ceremony aboard the vessel 22 Aug. 1850. The certificate itself is a handsome document from the middle of the 19th century and so far as I know is unknown to the emigration scholar.³

The other document in the collection is a handwritten letter from the bride's father, Sven Werner, to one of his brothers in Sweden, dated Andover, IL 14 Nov. 1850, in which the father discusses his daughter's marriage but also deals with the trials of the ocean crossing and the fate of the family up to the date of the letter.

The reason that these two documents have been preserved is the fact that the Svedlund marriage was not acknowledged by the church authorities in Sweden, since Hedstrom had not been ordained in the Swedish State Church. The couple had to petition for a new marriage ceremony, the while submitting these records to the church authorities as proof. The second marriage took place in the Holy Trinity Church in Gävle 11 July 1854.

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¹Nils William Olsson, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York 1820-1850 (SPANY)* (Stockholm and Chicago, IL 1967), pp. 218-219.

²*SPANY*, p. 13, n. 55

³The two witnesses aboard the *Bethel* were P.G. Liberg, member of the crew aboard the *Sophie* and Capt. C.E. Söderholm, master of the Swedish vessel *Hebe*, anchored in the port of New York at this time.



The marriage certificate signed by Olof Gustaf Hedström.