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David Edstrom

Swedish American Sculptor

Carver Edstrom Hildebrand*

(The appellation *Swedish American sculptor* is most appropriate for my great-uncle, David Edstrom. He was born in Sweden, grew up in the U.S. and returned to Sweden to study art. He remained in Europe for many years, practicing his craft as a sculptor in Stockholm, Florence, Paris, Berlin and London. Later in life he returned to the U.S., where he maintained studios in New York and Los Angeles.

David Edstrom sculpted the crowned heads of Europe as well as the royalty of Hollywood. He hobnobbed with the literati and consorted with the rich and famous on both sides of the Atlantic. He married twice and had many affairs of the heart. His last years were spent in Los Angeles, where he penned his autobiography, *The Testament of Caliban*.¹

His autobiography is the basic source for this article. Another valuable source is a collection of his scrapbooks. These are crammed with newspaper clippings telling of his art and sculpture and with newspaper and magazine articles written by him. Also included in the collection of memorabilia are a number of art catalogues and brochures which describe the exhibitions of his works; some photographs of his sculptures and many items of correspondence with his literary friends, his fellow artists and art critics as well as with members of the royal families of Sweden and Great Britain.)

Pehr David Emanuel Edstrom was born at Dalsheda, a large estate in Vetlanda Parish (Jön.) 27 March 1873, the son of Jonas Peter Edström, a tailor and some-time free church preacher, and his wife Charlotta Carolina Gustafsson. Dalsheda was a theological boarding school for boys as well as a producing farm. David's father was at this time the superintendent of the school as well as manager of the farm.

As a young man Jonas Peter had become involved in the disestablished church of Sweden, the movement known as "readers" or *läsare* with a connection to a foundation called *Fosterlandsstiftelsen* within the Swedish State Lutheran Church. Due to the laxness of the established church in ministering to the spiritual life of its followers, the readers were encouraged to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. At the time he became involved, Jonas Peter could neither read nor write. But he applied himself in getting an education and eventually became a minister and a teacher in the movement.

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Jonas Peter's father, Johan Wivat, had been a soldier in the Swedish Army and had fought in the Napoleonic Wars. He was born in Skeda Parish (Ög.) 1793. After the wars he married Maja Pettersdotter and they resided at Vikenstorp in Edshult Parish (Jön.) and it is probably from the name of the parish that the surname Edström evolved. Here they had four children born to them, the first of whom was Jonas Peter, born in 1829.²

David Edström's mother, Charlotta Carolina Gustafsson, was Jonas Peter's third wife. She was the youngest child of Nils Gustafsson and Inga Christina Nilsson and was born at Isberga Södergård, a farm in Heda Parish (Ög.). She was raised in the city of Motala in cultural surroundings and had, so the family tradition goes, as a girl danced with the Crown Prince of Sweden, later Charles XV, and the Prince of Wales of Great Britain, later Edward VII.

Her marriage to Jonas Peter was something of a business arrangement—he needed help to manage the large Dalsheda estate and she was precluded from marrying within her class, since she did not have a dowry. According to a family legend, her father had gambled away the family fortune.

Charlotta Carolina Gustafsson's ancestors can be traced back to the early part of the 17th century.³ Included among them were many soldiers and clergymen, as well as farmers. Several of them served as judges at the district assizes (*nämndemän*) and Charlotta's grandfather had been a member of the Swedish *Riksdag*. All of Charlotta's known ancestors lived in Östergötland *län*.

Jonas Peter and Charlotta Edström had four children. Only two of them—Johanna Maria Charlotta and Pehr David Emanuel—lived past early childhood.

The Edström emigration was the result of a liaison that Jonas Peter had had with a young servant girl at Dalsheda, which resulted in her giving birth to a son. As a consequence of this affair, Charlotta Edström determined that the family should leave Sweden. In May of 1880 they departed from Göteborg with New York as the destination. After passing through Castle Garden in that city they proceeded to Paxton, IL, where one of Charlotta's sisters had settled with her family some years before.

In Paxton the Rev. J.P. Edstrom, who never had done manual labor in his adult life, suffered a severe sunstroke as a result of working on the farm. The Edstroms then moved to the nearby community of Rankin, where they spent their first winter in the U.S. in a dilapidated shack. Cold winds blew through the cracks in the walls and both food to eat and fuel to heat their house were scarce. David was but seven years old at the time.

The Rev. Mr. Edstrom had two brothers who were prosperous farmers in Iowa and in 1882 he and his family moved to Ottumwa. Here he resumed his occupation as a clergyman of the local Swedish Mission Covenant Church. But the story of his adultery in Sweden soon reached Ottumwa and he lost his position. However, the Mission Covenant Church in nearby Burlington was in need of a minister and Edstrom succeeded in securing this charge.

It was while the Edstroms were living in Burlington that David first became conscious of his love and talent for artistic expression. He neglected his school studies in order to spend his time drawing. This resulted in his being sent to the school principal. Fortunately for David the principal recognized David's artistic talent and encouraged him in his artwork while at the same time chiding him to work harder at other studies.

The Rev. Mr. Edstrom soon encountered another problem as the clergyman of the Burlington Church. A member of the congregation, newly arrived from Sweden, brought with him the news of a revelation taking place within the church—in order to be a Christian, one must be wholly without sin. The new arrival had himself become perfect and so one by one the members of the church followed his example. Finally, only their minister remained sinful. Edstrom could not prevail against this desire for perfection and he resigned his position before he could be fired.

As a result of this second debacle as a clergyman, J.P. Edstrom decided that he would become a farmer. His brother, William Wivat, helped him acquire a small four acre truck farm south of Ottumwa. The Edstroms were at long last settled in the U.S. Young David was now eleven years old.

As a boy in Ottumwa David Edstrom had sold newspapers. When he became twelve years old he got his first regular job as a janitor and errand boy, working for Charles Sax and Brother's Clothing Emporium on Main Street. While working here, his interest in art resulted in an introduction to Johannes Schiewe, an artist of German origin, who resided in Ottumwa.

Johannes Schiewe was a highly cultured man, who, born in Berlin, had been educated at the Royal Imperial College and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Schiewe was married to Eleanor Blake, the daughter of an Iowa pioneer, Carl F. Blake, when she was an art student in Germany. After their marriage they came to Iowa, where both of them taught for a time at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant. They later moved to Ottumwa.

Schiewe took a spontaneous interest in young David. He introduced him to classic art through his large collection of copies of famous art works. Under Schiewe's guidance, David made drawings, modeled sculptures and studied literature, all the while continuing to work for Charles Sax.

When David Edstrom was sixteen years old his parents decided that he should go to England to continue his art studies. But he got no farther than Burlington where he became homesick. Ashamed to return to Ottumwa, David remained in Burlington, where he got a job working in a lumber yard. As a result of the strenuous work there he became ill and was sent home.

Back in Ottumwa young David went to work at John Morrell & Co., meat packers. His work there ended when an older friend persuaded him to study for the ministry and arranged for his admission to Central University, a Baptist college in nearby Pella. While at the college, David had severe differences of opinion with some of his professors regarding their fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible and as a result David dropped his studies for the ministry.

Returning to Ottumwa, David went to work for the Johnston Ruffler Co., a factory which made attachments for sewing machines. He also went to see his old mentor, Johannes Schiewe, who once more guided David in his artistic and intellectual development. Under Schiewe's direction David read many of the great books as well as biographies of famous men and studied German and French.

The financial panic that gripped the nation in 1894 resulted in David's losing his job at the Johnston Ruffler Company. He was a member of the Iowa National Guard and his company was ordered out to protect some coal mines near Ottumwa. Following his stint in the service, he secured a job with the Ottumwa Cutlery Works. It was at this time that an event occurred that was to have a profound effect upon his life and career as an artist.

During the summer of 1894 a unit of Jacob S. Coxey's Army of unemployed workers passed through Ottumwa on its way to Washington, D.C. With the army was a friend of David's by the name of Ed Leonard who had become an adventurer and a tramp. He had vague plans of going to Africa to make his fortune in the gold fields and he urged David to join him in this venture.

While he had no desire to go to Africa, David began to think once again about going to Europe to study art. Ever since his aborted trip to London at the age of sixteen, he had wanted to carry out this ambition of his. If for no other reason, he wanted to regain his lost self-respect. So, he agreed to accompany Ed as far as New York. From there, each would go his separate way.

Quitting his job at the Ottumwa Cutlery Works, David set out with Ed for New York City. They rode the rails, which was a new experience for David, but he learned quickly under Ed's guidance. Upon reaching New York they split up as planned. David signed as a stoker aboard the *S.S. Norge*, a freighter bound for Copenhagen. The *Norge* was a dilapidated ship with a shabby crew and the trip across the Atlantic was a brutal experience for David—he had many fights with other members of the crew. From Copenhagen he rode the ferry to Malmö where he got a job as a stoker on the *S.S. Allegro* bound for Stockholm.

Upon his arrival in Stockholm, David proceeded directly to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts where, after some difficulties, he finally managed to see its director, Count George Otto von Rosen (1843-1923). His meeting with von Rosen would have discouraged anyone less determined than David from trying to enter the Academy. Von Rosen, who resented the brash, egotistical American, told him that before he could be considered for admission to the Academy, he must first finish a three-year course at the Technical School. Moreover, von Rosen explained, only a few of the top graduates of that school were admitted to the Academy, and his chances of ever getting in were very poor.

Through determination and hard work David completed his studies at the Technical School in two years. During the summer vacation, he worked as a gardener at the country home of one of his instructors. Here he made his first lasting piece of sculpture, the bust of a young peasant girl called *Esther*.



Esther (young peasant girl). Bronze by David Edstrom (his first work). Location of original unknown. Plaster copy owned by the author.

As a result of his arduous work at the Technical School, his health suffered and he ended up in the hospital. Upon being discharged, he found that he was one of fifteen students who had qualified to take the final examination for admittance to the Academy. In the fall of 1896 he learned that he was one of four selected to be admitted to this august body of learning.

As a result of his hard work and high achievement during his first year at the Academy, David was given a private studio and a commission to create an original statue. The statue he chose to make was the reclining figure of a young girl struggling to free herself from the bondage of the deep snows of winter. As he explained in a letter to his mother:

"I am going to name her Spring. She symbolizes awakening. It is a young girl trying to get up. One leg is numb—the other is moving slightly. The head makes an effort upward and an arm presses against the earth to aid the arising. The eyes are closed, the lips slightly opened, giving her a childlike expression—yet I've tried to show promise of voluptuousness and sensuousness. The statue expresses a degree of pain from the blinding snow, and intense longing."

At the end of his second year at the Royal Academy, David was given a scholarship for the following year. But his poor health continued to plague him. He spent the summer prior to the third year in northern Sweden where it was believed the clean country air would help his tortured lungs. However, upon his return to Stockholm in the fall, he collapsed once again. His doctor advised him that he must spend a year or more out-of-doors or face an early death.

With funds raised through the good offices of von Rosen, David went for a lengthy stay near Umeå in Västerbotten *län*. Here he spent the winter of 1898-99 in a log farmhouse on the shore of Lake Tavel sjö. By the following summer his health had improved and he was ready to return to Stockholm and the Royal Academy.

During his stay at Lake Tavel sjö, David received a sympathetic and inspirational letter from Ellen Key (1849-1926), the Swedish author and feminist. She had heard about his illness from a close friend of his at the Academy. Ellen Key's letter not only buoyed David's self-confidence, but it began a lifelong friendship.

Upon his return to Stockholm, David sought out Ellen Key who received him with great warmth. She was familiar with his work as a sculptor and with the high regard in which he was held by his professors at the Academy. Through Ellen Key, David became acquainted with Ernest Thiel (1859-1947), a wealthy patron of the arts who had established a home for young artists in Neglinge, a small suburban town near Stockholm.

Thiel invited David to move to his Thielska Artists Colony in Neglinge and David readily accepted. While he was living at Thielska, he was commissioned by Thiel to make a marble copy of *Spring*. For this he was paid 5,000.00

Swedish kronor. When David's health problems continued to plague him, Thiel sent him to Switzerland to regain his health.

After a few months at the Swiss health resort of Davos, David's health greatly improved. With the financial support of Ernest Thiel, David headed for the warm climate of Italy. Upon his arrival in Florence, he immediately fell in love with the city and began making plans to stay there. The thought of returning to Stockholm and the Royal Academy became an anathema to him. He rented a villa on the slopes of Fiesole Mountain and enrolled in the academy at Florence. The year was 1900 and the new century held great promise for David Edstrom.

One day while he was living in Florence, Ellen Key came to visit. With her was a young lady by the name of Anna Levertin. She was the sister of the noted Swedish poet, Oscar Levertin. Ellen and Anna had leased an apartment in Florence and they invited David to be a frequent guest. Their apartment soon became the meeting place of an international group of artists and intellectuals.

As a result of what David considered to be a mild flirtation with Anna, Ellen became very upset and cut short her stay in Florence. She and Anna went to Rome; however, David soon followed them there after learning of their whereabouts from Anna. This caused Ellen much anguish—she was concerned about what Anna's parents might think about her letting Anna become involved with an impecunious artist.

Following David's and Anna's rendezvous in Rome, Ellen Key and Anna returned to Stockholm and David to Florence. It was not long before he received a wire from Stockholm in which Anna told him of her plans to visit Venice and asked that he meet her there. After two weeks together, they parted in Padua.

Upon his return to Florence, David acquired a new studio and became deeply engrossed in his work. Then one day in the fall of 1901 he had a surprise visit from Anna. Again his work was put aside as he and Anna enjoyed each other's company.

One winter day Anna and her mother arrived unexpectedly in Florence. Arrangements were soon made for David and Anna to be married. Anna was from a wealthy family and David was asked to sign a pre-nuptial agreement renouncing all rights to any property that Anna possessed or might inherit. This he refused to do. After much travail, Anna's family finally consented to David's position and the plans for the wedding went ahead.

Anna Fredrika Levertin was born in Stockholm 7 Nov. 1869, the daughter of Wilhelm Philip Levertin, an art and antiques dealer, and Sophie Albertina Davidson. Anna was an author and translator, who was very successful in her profession.⁴

David and Anna were married in Rome 1902 and honeymooned at Taormina, Sicily. But David soon revolted against the bondage of marriage, making his life with Anna most turbulent. Nevertheless their life together in Florence had its high moments. They entertained Prince Eugen (1865-1947), the brother of the King to be of Sweden, and himself a talented painter. The Swedish writer, dramatist and poet, Per Hallström (1866-1960), was among their close friends. Also, Selma Lagerlöf

(1858-1940), the Swedish novelist who was the first woman to receive the Nobel prize in literature, came to visit them.

In the spring of 1903 David and Anna traveled north to Stockholm where they were given a homecoming banquet by Anna's relatives. For the first time David came to realize the significance of the family into which he had married. Much of the wealth of Sweden was represented by the Jewish families who sat at the dinner table: the Josephsons, Levins, Levertins, Heymans, Davidsons, Jacobsons, and Abrahamsons. In their presence David felt uncouth and crude.

David secured a studio in Stockholm and began work on a number of commissions he had received. Among these was a portrait bust of Mrs. Anna Levin, one of Anna's cousins. While working on this bust, David began to be suspicious of Anna; he suspected her of having a secret lover. When his suspicions were confirmed by Anna Levin and by Mrs. Thiel, David left Anna. In June of 1904, he and a friend set sail for Havana, Cuba.

After seven months of roughing it in Cuba, David departed for New York for a brief visit before returning to Europe. Back in Florence he secured the same studio and apartment where he and Anna had lived. He resumed his work with a vengeance, abstaining from all pleasures of the flesh.

It was during this stay in Florence that David became acquainted with Hutchins Hapgood (1869-1944) and Maurice Sterne (1878-1957). For awhile the three were intimate friends, but they later had a falling out. Hapgood was a celebrated American author whose *The Spirit of the Ghetto*, published in 1902, was a pioneering work in sociology.

Maurice Sterne was an internationally recognized painter and sculptor, born in Russia, and who had come to the U.S. at the age of twelve. As an adult he lived in Italy and the United States. He was a handsome young man who had many affairs of the heart. Among them was an affair with the exotic Russian actress, Alla Nazimova (1879-1945). Later in life he married the oft-married Mabel Dodge Lukan (1879-1962).

In his autobiography Hapgood writes about a murderous fight between David Edstrom and Maurice Sterne in a Florentine cafe.⁵ However, the fight did not affect their friendship and admiration for one another. Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) also tells of the fight in her enigmatic style of writing, in one of her word portraits titled "Men."⁶

During their time together in Florence, Hapgood collaborated with Edstrom in the preparation of his biography. Edstrom was suffering from a mysterious malady at the time which resulted in the paralysis of his right arm. As a result of the paralysis, Edstrom could not work as a sculptor and became very dejected. In a despondent mood Edstrom revealed to Hapgood some of the most intimate facts of his life—things that he later regretted telling.

Edstrom's biography became a *cause celebre* between the two men. They had violent disagreements about what should and what should not be included. When

Edstrom finally wrote his autobiography many years later he told about this dispute which still rankled.⁷ Hapgood also revealed his side of the argument in his autobiography which was published after David's.⁸ Moreover, Leo Stein (1872-1947), (Gertrude's brother) also recalls this controversy in his collected papers, *Journey Into Self*.⁹

David resolved the matter by moving to Paris and taking with him the manuscript notes that Hapgood had made for the biography. There he asked a friend whose judgment he valued to read them. The friend corroborated David's thoughts regarding the inadvisability of ever publishing the biography and the documents were then burned. While David's physical health was much improved since his move to Paris, his mental health was still not good.

In Paris David renewed his friendship with Leo and Gertrude Stein whom he had met in Florence. One day while visiting the Steins, David bumped into Hutchins Hapgood. Neither of them said anything about the notes that David had taken and destroyed. A few days later Gertrude told David that Hutchins had shown her the manuscript of a new book he had written about David Edstrom and that she had persuaded him not to publish it.

While he was living in Paris, David met and fell in love with Cora Downer. Cora was the head of the Christian Science Church in Paris. When David told her about his physical and mental health problems and asked for her help, she willingly began treating him. After a series of daily treatments, his paralysis was cured and mental outlook much improved. His gratitude to Cora was as boundless as his adoration of her.

Cora Evelyn Downer was born in Illinois 1870. Her parents were Arthur M. Downer and Anna E. Raymond. Her father's family came from Vermont and her mother's family came from England. While Cora was a young girl her parents moved to Dubuque, Iowa, where her father owned a brewery.

As a child Cora had been healed by a Christian Science practitioner and when she was 15 years old, she herself became a healer in the sect. She soon gained an international reputation as a practitioner and teacher of the Christian Science doctrine. In her autobiography, *What is Remembered*, Alice B. Toklas (1877-1967) had the following to say about Cora: "One of her church friends was a Miss Cora Downer from Kalamazoo[sic], a worldly woman who dressed well and had a large acquaintance in the fashionable world."¹⁰

Alice Toklas further stated that "David Edstrom was a good-looking young Swedish sculptor. . . [who] had known many American women in Florence where he had lived for several years."¹¹ And she described Anna Edstrom, who was still married to David although they had been separated for many years, as follows: "Mrs. Edstrom looked older than Edstrom, she was an intellectual and was quite plain. She wore men's hats, boots, gloves."¹²

Anna and David were divorced in 1907 and in the summer of 1908 Cora and David became engaged to be married. They were married the following summer in London where David was at the time giving a one-man exhibition of his works.

Upon their return to Paris, the Edstroms rented an apartment in an old palace on the Quai de Béthune on the Isle St. Louis. Cora was a woman of some means; however, David soon discovered that Cora had invested large sums of money with a scheming promoter who promised her spectacular returns on her investments. Not only was Cora bilked out of her own money, but she also lost large sums she had borrowed from friends.

In the spring of 1910 David was invited to exhibit some of his sculptures, along with the paintings of Carl Larsson (1853-1919) and others, at a show of the Secession Society of Swedish Artists in Berlin. Cora went with him and they remained in Berlin for more than a year, living at the Kaiserhof Hotel. While in Berlin, David made busts of Count Eric Trolle (1863-1934), the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and of his Countess; of Frederik Willem van Eeden (1860-1932), Dutch poet and writer, and of Dr. Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943). And while living in Berlin, he met the Crown Prince of Sweden, Gustaf Adolf (1882-1973), later King Gustaf VI Adolf.

Following their stay in Berlin, David and Cora went to Sweden. David put on a private exhibition in Stockholm that was well received and many commissions were forthcoming as a result. Among them was one from his old mentor, Ernest Thiel. Thiel was enchanted with Cora. He fell in love with her intelligence, wit, and charm as did many other of David's Swedish friends.

When their stay in Sweden dragged on as a result of David's many commissions, Cora became bored. Moreover, her health suffered from the harsh Swedish climate. With David's reluctant acquiescence, she returned to Paris alone and opened up their apartment there. David remained in Sweden, but he too was becoming anxious to leave and he hurried to complete the work he had begun.

In the spring of 1913 he had an exhibit at the Patterson Gallery on Old Bond Street in London. It received the enthusiastic praise of the London art critics, among them Paul Konody, Haldane Macfall, Collins Baker, and Sir Claude Philips. During the exhibit Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and his wife, Crown Princess Margaret, arrived in London. The prince was anxious to have David make a portrait bust of him. And while David was doing this, it was arranged that he should also make a bust of Princess Patricia, Crown Princess Margaret's sister.

During his stay in London, David became friendly with Gaylord Wilshire (1861-1927), an American expatriate who had lived for many years in England. Wilshire was an interesting and unusual man, a millionaire socialist, his many interests included publishing, politics, real estate, and medicine. Among his publications was the weekly *Wilshire's Magazine* which was written for and by radical intellectuals. He was an unsuccessful Socialist candidate for the U.S. Congress from California and for Parliament from London as well as for the Canadian Parliament. His real estate interests in Southern California resulted in Wilshire Boulevard being named for him.¹³

One day while he was living in London, David received two issues of an American magazine, *Musical Advance*, from a friend in New York. These issues

contained as feature articles the opening chapters of the revealing biography that Hutchins Hapgood had written about David. They were titled, "David, The Story of a Soul." Upon reading them, David felt humiliated to the point of despair. Fortunately, these articles were all of the Hapgood biography that were published; the magazine folded after the second issue.

David returned home to Paris and Cora for Christmas of 1913. Upon his arrival he was shocked to find that their joint bank account was drawn down to almost nothing. This was a surprise to him since he had made several sizeable deposits not too long before. Cora was nervous and evasive about what had happened to the money. One day in a fit of anguish, she furrowed her face with her fingernails and screamed accusations that David had injured her. For David this was the last straw, and he left Cora never to see her again.

David had known for some time that Cora probably was addicted to drugs. This was, no doubt, the explanation of Cora's neuroses and their depleted bank account. Nevertheless, David was blamed by many for Cora's problems. In her autobiography, Gertrude Stein says that ". . . David Edstrom, the fat Swedish sculptor. . . married the head of the Christian Science Church in Paris and destroyed her."¹⁴

After leaving Cora, David went to Göteborg, Sweden, where he had a contract to do some work on the town square and fountain for the city. While he was in Göteborg he also made a portrait bust of Dr. Axel Romdahl (1880-1951), the director of the Göteborg Museum.

David had also contracted to do a portrait bust of Ellen Key and in July of 1914 he went to her villa, *Strand*, which was on Lake Vättern near Alvastra. It was while he was staying at Ellen Key's villa that Germany declared war on Russia and France. This caused much dissension among Ellen's many guests who were a mixture of nationalities and ideologies. Soon they all departed. David finished his work as fast as possible and then he too left *Strand*.

Ever since he was a boy in Ottumwa, David had been fascinated with the fraternal order of Freemasons. One day during his stay in Sweden he was visited by a friend from his days in Umeå who was in Stockholm on Masonry business. The friend offered to help David become a Mason and David journeyed north to Umeå where, in a memorable ceremony under the light of the Aurora Borealis, he was inducted into the secret order.

In the summer of 1915 David Edstrom left Sweden for the United States. David stayed briefly in New York City, living at the National Arts Club in Gramercy Square. Exhausted from his work in Sweden, he took the advice of an old friend and went to Sewanee, TN, where he stayed for a time at the Faculty Club of the University of the South. Later he took up residence at Saint Andrews, a Jesuit monastery near Sewanee. While he was living in Sewanee he made a trip to his boyhood home of Ottumwa.

The occasion of David Edstrom's visit in February of 1916 was a major event for the city of Ottumwa. A large banquet was held in his honor which was attended

by many of his boyhood friends. David gave a number of talks at luncheon clubs and schools.

While in Ottumwa, David contracted to build a Civil War Monument for the city. Back in Sewanee he set about sculpting the large eagle that was to sit atop the tall column of the monument. He also worked on the manuscript of a booklet containing *A Selection of Articles and Comments on David Edström and His Sculpture by Eminent European Critics and Writers*.¹⁵ While in Sewanee, David also made arrangements with his Masonic brethren to take the third to thirty-second degrees of Masonry and gain entry to the Scottish Rite Lodge.

In 1917 David left Sewanee and returned to New York City where he opened a studio on Broadway near 59th Street. While in New York, he wrote a number of magazine articles. An especially interesting article of his, entitled "The Hungry Man of the North," appeared in the 24 Nov. 1917 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

During the time that David was living in New York City, Cora Edstrom had gone to live in the Los Angeles area. She stayed at the residence of her old friend, Gaylord Wilshire, in Pasadena, California. During her stay in the Los Angeles area, she filed for a divorce from David. The original papers were filed in 1917, but the action was not pursued and the case was dismissed.

Cora's filing for divorce provoked David's wrath. In a letter dated September 1, 1917, he castigated her for this action, and further explained: "... notes for your stay at the Sanitarium are due next month and I have no possible way to pay them. I gave you every cent of clear profit in advance [that] I will have from my Ottumwa monument for your cure." Cora died in 1921 in the town of Peru, Vermont, at the age of 51 years.

In 1919 David Edstrom left New York City and moved to Los Angeles. His early years in Los Angeles were a whirlwind of activity. He worked as art director for a motion picture studio and wrote many articles about art, politics, and himself for the *Los Angeles Times*. He had exhibitions of his sculpture at the Cannell & Chaffin Galleries on West Seventh Street and at the Hall of Arts on North Highland Avenue. He continued to practice his craft making busts of Harry Chandler (1864-1944), the publisher of the *LA Times*; of Gloria Swanson (1899-1983), the motion picture actress; and of Josef von Sternberg (1894-1969), the motion picture director.

In 1924 David made a quick trip to Sweden to deliver a series of lectures at the University of Uppsala. The subject of the lectures, which were given under the auspices of the Olaus Petri Foundation, was "An Artist's View of Life." While the subject was innocuous, David was the first non-Lutheran ever to lecture at the University, and his religious views were, to say the least, unorthodox.

David was much in demand as a speaker at various civic functions in Los Angeles, particularly those involving Swedish dignitaries. In 1923 he was the introductory speaker at a banquet that the local Swedish colony gave for Robert Andrews Millikan (1868-1953), the President of the California Institute of Technology, in honor of his having received the Nobel Prize in Physics that year.

In July 1926 Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and his wife paid a visit to Los Angeles. All of Los Angeles was agog for this auspicious occasion. Upon his arrival, one of the first questions the Crown Prince asked concerned the whereabouts of his friend David Edstrom. A mass meeting was held at the Shrine Civic Auditorium for the Crown Prince and his Crown Princess. The motion picture actresses Greta Garbo (1905-) and Anna Q. Nilsson (1888-1974) participated in the ceremonies as did David Edstrom who presented the royal couple with a piece of sculpture he had made especially for them.

In 1935 Gertrude Stein visited Los Angeles in the course of her American tour. While there, she had a reunion with her old friend David Edstrom. They had not seen one another since before World War I. She tells about their get together in the Introduction to *Everybody's Biography*.¹⁶

Among the sculptures that David made during his years in Los Angeles were a bust of Abraham Lincoln; a statue of Max Whittier, a local pioneer; and a statue of the famous Crimean War nurse, Florence Nightingale (1820-1910). Also, he had a grandiose dream of creating for the City of Los Angeles an immense monument he called *Man Triumphant*.

But David did not live to accomplish his dream. On 12 Aug. 1938 he died at the age of 65 years, leaving behind a legacy of many fine pieces of sculpture. All in all, some 87 pieces of his works of art have been accounted for. Most are scattered among European museums while a number are in private collections in Europe and the United States.

Notes

¹David Edstrom, *The Testament of Caliban* (New York and London 1937).

²Letters to the author from Leif Carlsson of the Emigrant Institute, Växjö, Sweden, dated 15 July and 12 Sept. 1985.

³Letters from Elisabeth Thorsell of Järfälla, Sweden, dated 14 Aug. 1986 and 27 Jan. 1987. See Charlotta Gustafsson's ancestral table below.

⁴"Pehr David Emanuel Edström," article in *Svenskt Konstnärslexikon*, II (Stockholm 1953), pp. 74-75.

⁵Hutchins Hapgood, *A Victorian in the Modern World* (New York 1939.)

⁶Gertrude Stein, *Two: Gertrude Stein and Her Brother and Other Early Portraits* (New Haven, CT 1951).

⁷Edstrom, *Caliban*, pp. 225-235.

⁸Hapgood, *A Victorian*, pp. 215-220.

⁹Edmund Fuller (Ed.), *Journey Into Self: Being the Letters, Papers and Journals of Leo Stein* (New York 1950), p. 173.

¹⁰Alice B. Toklas, *What is Remembered* (New York 1963), p. 46.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

¹³Carol Dunlap, *California People* (Salt Lake City, UT 1982), pp. 221-222.

¹⁴Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York 1933), p. 95.

¹⁵David Edström, *David Edström and His Sculpture* (Sewanee, TN 1917).

¹⁶Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York 1971), p. 6

Ancestral Table (Ahnentafel) for Carolina Charlotta Gustafsson

1. GUSTAFSSON, Carolina Charlotta, b. in Heda, Alvastra Parish (Ög.) 23 Nov. 1833; m. in Vetlanda Parish (Jön.) 20 Feb. 1867 Jonas Peter Wivat EDSTROM; d. in Ottumwa, Wapello Co., IA 11 Dec. 1903.
- I. 2. GUSTAFSSON, Nils, b. in Rogslösa Parish (Ög.) 25 April 1794; d. in Motala 11 July 1846; m. in Vinnerstad Parish (Ög.) 10 Feb. 1818

3. NILSDOTTER, Inga Christina, b. in Vinnerstad 24 Nov. 1795; d. in Motala 17 June 1859.
- II. 4. NILSSON, Gustaf, juror in the district assizes and member of the Swedish *Riksdag*, b. in Rogslösa in Dec. 1767; d. in Rogslösa 17 Sept. 1826; m. in Rogslösa 23 Oct. 1791
5. LUNDBERG, Brita Christophersdotter, b. in Rogslösa 18 Feb. 1772; d. in Rogslösa 4 May 1845.
6. JOACHIMSSON, Nils, b. in Vedemö, Vinnerstad; m.
7. APPELBOM, Ulrica, d. in Vinnerstad 26 Dec. 1803.
- III. 8. GUSTAFSSON, Nils, b. ca. 1735; d. in Rogslösa 17 May 1784; m. in Rogslösa 24 Feb. 1767
9. LUNDBERG, Charlotta, b. in Rogslösa 25 June 1738; d. ca. 1804.
10. LUNDBERG, Christopher, juror in the district assizes, b. in Rogslösa 18 Oct. 1797; m. in Svanshals Parish (Ög.) 1 July 1763
11. JÖNSDOTTER, Catharina, b. in Svanshals 25 Feb. 1747; d. 1833.
- IV. 18. LUNDBERG, Nils, b. in Rogslösa 9 Oct. 1704; d. in Rogslösa 1 March*1770; m. in 1728
19. SANTESSON, Brita Christina, b. in Lund 2 Aug. 1705; d. in Rogslösa 23 June 1766. 20. = 18.
22. LINDMARK, Jöns, vestryman and parish clerk, b. 1702; d. in Svanshals 1772; m.
23. BENGTSDOTTER, Stina.
- V. 36. LUNDBERG, Jonas, army quartermaster, b. ca. 1673; d. in Rogslösa 1725; m.
37. JESCHOSDOTTER, Elsa, b. in Rogslösa 1672; d. in Rogslösa 17 April 1759.
38. SANTESSON, Christopher, city councillor in Lund, b. in Bökhult, Långaryd Parish (Jön.) ca. 1672; d. in Lund 18 Jan. 1719; m. 2 Oct. 1703
39. SKOUGH, Helena Nilsdotter, d. in Lund 10 Aug. 1728.
44. LINDMARK, Nicolaus, clergyman in Rinna Parish (Ög.), b. in Ronneby Parish (Blek.) 1669; d. in Rinna 1704; m. in Ronneby 11 Jan. 1701
45. ASCHANIUS, Ingrid, b. ca. 1683; d. 19 Feb. 1763.
- VI. 74. CARLSSON, Jescho, cavalryman, b. ca. 1639; d. in Rogslösa 1689; m.
75. HÅKANSDOTTER, Ingrid, b. ca. 1638; d. in Rogslösa 1731.
76. PERSSON, Sante, regimental quartermaster, b. in Bökhult, Långaryd ca. 1643; d. in Stockholm 1690; m. before 1673
77. ANDERSDOTTER, Catharina, b. 1653; d. in Långaryd 20 Feb. 1710.
78. SKOUGH, Nils, m.
79. JÖNSDOTTER, Anna.
88. BRINGANDER, Sven Nilsson, burger in Linköping and Ronneby; m.
89. CHRISTOPHERSDOTTER, Karin.
90. ASCHANIUS, Johannes, clergyman, chaplain with the Swedish Army in Pomerania, Germany 1673; clergyman in Rogslösa; b. in Hägerstad Parish (Ög.) 1646; d. in Rogslösa 7 Oct. 1707; m. in 1676
91. JÖNSDOTTER, Beata, b. in 1656; d. in Rogslösa 2 May 1734.
- VII. 150. CARLSSON, Håkan, d. in Rogslösa 1675.
152. HÅKANSSON, Per, b. ca. 1612; d. in Långaryd 6 Jan. 1695; m. ca. 1643
153. SANTEDOTTER, Karin, d. ca. 1664.
154. NILSSON, Anders, sheriff in Bredaryd Parish (Jön.); d. before 4 Oct. 1686; m.
155. BÖRJESDOTTER, Brita, b. ca. 1622; d. in Långaryd 8 March 1709.
180. NILSSON, Per, farmer in Aska, Hägerstad; m.
181. JOHANNESDOTTER, Maria
182. ANDERSSON, Jöns, royal bailiff in Kinda and Ydre Hundreds.
206. PERSSON, Sante, m.
207. PERSDOTTER, Gunnel.
- VIII. 412. ---, Per in Bökhult, Långaryd.
414. ---, Per In Vislebo, Långaryd.

**Släkten Santesson*, p. 53 has 1 August.