

# Swedish American Genealogist

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Volume 11 | Number 2

Article 5

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6-1-1991

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### Recommended Citation

(1991) "Bishop Hill Society Formed in Sweden," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 11 : No. 2 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol11/iss2/5>

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# Bishop Hill Society Formed in Sweden

A new historical society, *Bishop Hill Sällskapet* (The Bishop Hill Society) has been organized in Sweden. It is one of the most recent groups to turn its attention to the emigration from Sweden to the U.S. and was founded 27 May 1989 in Biskopskulla Parish (Upps.), the parish from which the village of Bishop Hill, Illinois derives its name.

The purpose of this new organization is to spur interest in Bishop Hill and the history of the colony which goes back to 1846 and which in 1996 will mark its sesquicentennial. The Bishop Hill Society also seeks to keep the memory alive of this exodus from Uppland, Västmanland and Hälsingland to the New World in the 19th century.

The story of Bishop Hill, IL is a fascinating chapter in the long history of Swedish settlements in the United States. Though most of the emigrants, who arrived in Bishop Hill came from the provinces of Västmanland and Hälsingland, it was in Biskopskulla in Uppland, where the founder of the Erik Jansson movement had his roots. It was here that Erik Jansson, "The Prophet from Biskopskulla" was born in 1808 and where his parents rented a farm in the village of Landsberga. Today the farm has disappeared but a memorial stone, erected in 1979, marks the spot.

Near Biskopskulla Parish church, which dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries, stands an old baking building (*bagarestuga*) from 1727. Here Lagunda Historical Society (*Lagunda Hembygdsförening*) has opened a museum, dedicated to the memory of this remarkable religious movement which brought a total of 1,500 Janssonists to Illinois during the years 1846-1854. The evening before Midsummer Eve the annual Bishop Hill Day is celebrated in the parish social rooms followed by a midnight concert in the parish church itself.

Membership in *Bishop Hill Sällskapet* is open to all interested persons. Further information may be had by writing to the society c/o Biskopskulla Prästgård, 190 63 Örsundsbro, SWEDEN.