

9-1-1992

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Recommended Citation

Stålhand, Johan (1992) "Early Emigrant Letters from Wisconsin," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 12 : No. 3 , Article 4.

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Early Emigrant Letters from Wisconsin

Johan Stålhand*

On my recent visit to the United States in order to attend the dedication ceremonies of the newly refurbished and renovated Wallenberg Hall at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL, I had the opportunity of also visiting the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center. When I saw the efforts being made at this excellent institution in preserving the heritage of the Swedish immigrant, it struck me that I could, in a modest way, possibly add to its superb collection a few early immigrant letters from Wisconsin, which were in my possession. These early letters, mirroring the experiences of Carl Gustaf Stark** and his family, are also a part my personal heritage inasmuch as Carl Gustaf Stark's sister, Maria Gustafva,¹

was my paternal great great grandmother.

“New York 27 June 1847²”

My Dear Sister Stafva!

I wish to tell you in all haste that all of us arrived here in this city in good health on Midsummer Day, 24 June, at 7: 00 p.m., after a voyage lasting fifty days. We will remain here until the 28th of the month, i.e. until tomorrow afternoon, when we will resume our travels up through the country. The journey from Stockholm and here has in most instances gone very well, virtually without storms or foul weather. Time has not been heavy on our hands if you realize that we had to anchor for two whole days in the Stockholm archipelago and just as long in the port of Helsingør in Denmark. From the latter city we were forced to tack all the way through the Kattegatt, the Skagerack and the North Sea, as well as the entire length of the English Channel, until we reached the Spanish Sea, where we picked up a good wind. On 22 May we passed Dover in the English Channel, along the coast of Kent, where we saw both British and French cutters. So far as our health is concerned we cannot complain. Mari (the wife) has suffered the most from seasickness; the children and I almost not at all, while both Hugo (the son) and Augusta (the daughter) have not been bothered at all. This illness is not dangerous and children can throw up one minute and eat the next. The worst has been the fact that the cabin has been so tiny and the children so many and so small, that we have had mostly problems with Hugo and the fact that we had a ticket

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**See the preceding article, “Are Family Traditions Reliable?” by Dr. Erik Wikén, which also deals with Carl Gustaf Stark and his family.

which included food on board. We have suffered from this since if one has been used to lighter foods, one soon tires of porridge, pork and dried peas. The body, which suffers from seasickness and the lack of exercise, cannot tolerate the heavy diet, and when it is confronted by this blessed porridge over and over again, it reacts negatively. If we had not taken with us some of our own light food, which now has been consumed, we would have starved.

Except for the lack of variety in our food, there is not much to relate. On our voyage here we have seen a few sharks, whales and dolphins, but the best of all up to this moment, was the sight of New York, the attractive estates surrounding the city, all the movement and the large population (between 400,000 and 500,000); several thousand ships of all nations are here at anchor and at least a thousand steam boats crisscross the water in all directions. The city itself is beautiful, if not quite as attractive as Stockholm.

So far as future hopes are concerned, we know as little here as we did in Sweden, but we all hope for the best, since we all are positive in our spirits, and we should be happy here if it had not been that the separation from you and our other relatives and friends was so difficult and so crushing that it still is recorded in our hearts. Say what you please, this was a very important step to take, to leave close relatives, our fatherland and friends in order to begin a journey to unknown countries and fates. It goes even more deeply, since we are aware of the fact that there is no return.

We hope that you all are in good health and that you are in good spirits, like we are, and we wish you all good luck and success, you and your children, grandmother Hafström, brother Carl and sister-in-law, sisters Sina and Thilda and their children as well as their husbands, Claes, Rickard, Wicktor and Lorns, aunt Bäckström and all her children, Winberg and his family. You must greet Mari and aunt Dahlberg and tell Mari to remember her promise. Please greet brother Reif, brother Nyberg, Wallin, Ladén, Pehr Nilsson, the old lady Kilén, if she is still alive. You must greet uncle Widman and ask him to greet our friend Häslin (Häslén), as well as all other friends, which are too numerous to list, please greet them all. Don't forget my books.

We will now travel on as I mentioned earlier directly to Hedströms³ in Wisconsin, and you may expect letters from there, by the grace of God, around the end of the year. Goodbye.

Your brother C.G.Stark

Dear Stafva, don't forget to greet Mrs. Nordström.

Ask brother Carl to greet Arenius, the old friend, his wife and children."

The next letter from Gustaf Stark to his sister is dated Fredonia, Washington County, WI 1 December 1848:

“My dearly Beloved Sister!

Your very welcome letter arrived here 17 October at a time that I had given up the hope of hearing from you. We believed that because of the troubling times in Europe the mail service had been interrupted. You can well imagine, my dear sister, how happy we were that you and your children are well and that all of our relatives also enjoy the same fortune. So far as we are concerned, I have since my arrival here, enjoyed good health; Mari somewhat so and all of our children have been well, until Sunday, 17 September, when a terrible accident struck us. Our poor Gustaf (Adolf) was going out to look after the cattle and when he walked over a pile of logs, one of the logs loosened, rolled off and broke his thigh bone. This type of accident is a horrible thing anywhere, but particularly here, where no help is to be found. Nature is of course a great healer, but in this case it is not enough. We attempted to place his leg in the right position, placing splints as well as we could, in order to keep the leg straight. The following morning I summoned a quack doctor, an old French soldier, who had fought under Napoleon, and who now is a settler in America, who tried to apply the splints in a better position than I, but I still feel that he did not set the bone correctly. Now the bone has healed and the lad moves around with the aid of a crutch. The future will show if our poor son will become a cripple or not. During these tragic and trying days the lad has demonstrated more courage than all of us. He has sought to comfort us as best he could. He wished to greet you, dear Stafva, as well as his cousins, that he believes he will be restored to health, able to live to give you all a big hug.

You asked me how we are situated, or if we are planning to return or remain here forever. My dear Stafva, we do not like it here in America, we do not wish to stay, but since we are here, we must remain until opportunities open up for us to return, without being entirely without means when we arrive home.

The prospects here are not as dark, as many believe. A couple of Germans, whose farm borders ours, which is just as large, and has just as many acres cleared and just as many cattle as we have, but with an inferior location and with not such a beautiful view and with poorer quality of soil, sold it a month ago for \$600.00. It is true that there are not so many buyers, but two or three years make a big difference in the value of real estate. When we moved here last year the country round about us was a wilderness and the land above us was unsold. Today there is no land for sale within a radius of fifty English miles and I have masses of settlers all around me. I hope that within the time frame mentioned above we shall have 30 to 40 acres of tillable soil as well as meadow land, and that if we live and enjoy health, we easily could sell, in order to return to our beloved fatherland.

In most places in America the soil is good with little if any taxes. So far as hired help and servants are concerned, it is the best country in the world. In order to become a farmer, one must have good and experienced help and at least \$600.00 in cash. One will then be able in a couple of years with hard work to have a farm which will give one a good income. So far as I was concerned, I only possessed half of this sum and the hired help was in the beginning unsatisfactory. In addition I had too large a family for these meager assets.

Both my wife and I have had to work, slave and experience many difficult moments, more so than I care to talk about or enumerate. But so far we have not suffered unduly, and I am certain that if I can pull through this year, we shall be able, thanks to hard work, have a good income from our farm. Of the heavy forest on my land I have felled trees and substantially cleared ten acres, of which eight acres have been planted this fall, four acres in wheat and four acres in rye, all of it in the best condition, We have two cows and a heifer, who will calf next summer. Our oxen are of the highest quality. In addition we have a heifer calf and three small pigs. One of our cows calfed 12 Aug. 1847 and still gives us a little milk, although she will calf next May, but she has during this time given us over 800 gallons of milk. We have, however, gone to extra trouble to care for our cattle, something which is not usual around here.

Our fortune has been that I have been able to work as I have done. It has been both good for me and a pleasure and even comfort during bitter moments. God only knows how we could have made it otherwise. At least we could not have counted on such a speedy improvement up until now. On the other hand we are in somewhat difficult economic circumstances and the coming eight months cause me some concern if we shall be able to have the most necessary items. Our small resources are at an end and it is difficult to get help here. Your offer to help me, my good sister, is therefore very welcome and I ask you to give me a loan of \$25.00. You shall be assured my dear sister, that I would not ask you for help, if I knew that I could not repay you in the future. But, my dear sister, I need this help soon. Will you therefore go to Consul Arfwedson⁴ and procure a note, made out to a secure and known mercantile house in New York and in addition ask them the fastest and most secure means of having this money sent to me. Or if you go to Mr. Tydén,⁵ a wholesale merchant, I hope that he will help you willingly, maybe I could then have the money within four months.

You mention the presence of cholera in Stockholm. That is a very disturbing piece of news but I hope that it will not be as severe as the last time. We will ask God that the disease will not strike you or your family. You need to live for your children and even for me and my family. Our sole comfort and our longing and hope is, if God wills it, that he will allow us to return and see you all healthy. Don't fail me in this hope, my dear sister, so far it depends on you. Try to avoid worries, unless they concern your dear children and your livelihood - this is your only and highest duty. This will give you comfort in times of adversity, but

never regret. Think of your brother and though he is far away, he still remains forever your dearest friend.

You mentioned in your letter the case of Mrs. Nordström. It must have been a terrible ending and both Mari and I feel sorry for her. She must have been suffering much before she decided to take this desperate step.

Österman⁶ has visited us twice, the first time I believe I mentioned, in the month of March. He had good health and told us that he liked it in America. We don't have much to do with other Swedes, in fact we scarcely know how they are. Unonius⁷ has now become pastor in an American parish, where he has a meager income. The only people we associate with is the Cassel⁸ family, which lives next to us, and whose outlook is even more dismal than our own. When it comes to homesickness, it is difficult to determine, whether we or they are most affected.

Finally I ask you to greet all relatives and friends, thank brother Carl for his letter. Tell grandmother that Loms can write next summer, when the letter in the letter box will cost less to tell us how you all are. Greet Sina and Thilda from me and Mari and I ask you to let us know in your next letter that you write how they and their children are, even Sätta. You should also tell me how the Dahlbergs are.

Please greet Mr. Wideqvist⁹ and Brother Ladén. Please let me know if they still are married. My dear sister, let me know how Augusta's mother is doing and if she has asked about the girl.

In addition to the letter I am expecting from you I ask you to send a letter in the letter box next summer. It is the only happiness we have in our gloom. I will not write until next fall.

Greet your children and thank Fredrik for his literary efforts. Ask him to continue with his diligence, in his obedience to you and tenderness toward his brothers. Greet them all from me and Mari and his cousins. Greet brother Reif but most of all greetings to you from all of us.

Thanks for the books and the greeting from old Häcktor to all relatives. Don't forget your address.

Where do Claes and Calle live at the present time?

Your loving brother

C.G.Stark"

The next letter is dated Port Washington, WI 8 October 1855 and is addressed to Gustaf Fredrik Stålhand, Gustafva's son and my great grandfather:

"My Dear Fredrik!"¹⁰

I have properly received your two letters, the last, dated 28 August and the earlier, dated 23 September 1854, where you tell me of your beloved Mother's and my dearest sister's death. Even though my sorrow and that of my wife is great and will be so forever, we shall for the present not speak of it, except to ask of you, my beloved children, never to forget your loving Mother, but to ordain your lives so, that she, who at the present time is residing in the heavenly mansions can look down upon you with the greatest happiness.

In the last letter your now deceased mother wrote to me, dated 8 February 1849, she sent me the amount of 90 *riksdaler*¹¹ and from my wife's relatives the sum of 135 *riksdaler* or altogether 225 *riksdaler riksgälds*, which I received, but have not, because of many difficulties, been able to repay. When I received yours and your brothers' letter last year, in which you mention your precarious financial situation, I wanted to attempt to send you something, but since the mail and forwarding of money in America are in a very unstable state, I decided to attempt to send a small amount, and if this reached you I would be prepared to send more. I therefore bought, with much difficulty, two small notes payable from R.K.Swift¹² in Chicago, made out to C.D.Arfwedson¹³ in Stockholm, dated 8 December 1854, one of them for 22 *riksdaler banco*, and mailed a few days later to you with an enclosed letter and addressed to Jalmar and Winberg, the other for 33 *riksdaler banco* to my wife's relatives, via a letter to my brother-in-law, C.L.Hafström, with an enclosed letter to my mother-in-law and sister-in-law. From your latest letter I learn with great disappointment that neither the notes nor the letters have been received and therefore lost to you when you are in such great need. I have therefore again secured a second note payable in the same sum, which I am herewith enclosing to you and your brothers, hoping that this will arrive safely.

I am very happy concerning your future, which has improved so that if you live within your means, you can not only help yourself in a respectable fashion, but also aid your brothers, in case they should need assistance. I will therefore ask you to continue as you have begun, so that in the future you might honor your father's name.

I don't wish to convince you to come over (to America), so long as things are going so well for you. I believe it is better for you to stay at home for a time. Who knows, but that you, by using your energy and good deportment could create a better future for yourself at home than here. On the other hand, if you in the future should wish to come here, I don't believe that it would be difficult for you in this country to do well and you would thereby fulfill my wishes and those of my family to see you and your brothers here with us.

So far as your brothers are concerned, who don't have your schooling, nor as good chances to make it at home, it would undoubtedly be better for them to come on over as soon as possible. They could stay with me until they could master the language somewhat. We have a schoolhouse next to us and in addition all of my children are able to speak English so that your brothers could soon learn. After that they could choose which occupation they wished. They would always be sure of being treated decently and being paid many times more than they would get in Sweden. A youth here, provided he is sober and willing to work, can over a period of a few years amass a small fortune, making him thus independent. Therefore if you are able, try to get your brothers to come over next spring. Conditions here are so unstable that it is extremely difficult and very costly to forward money to Sweden. My note to you in the amount of 22 *riksdaler* cost me a total of 30 *riksdaler banco*. I would like to know as soon as possible if your mother left an estate. If there was no money there, perhaps you could help them. In the latter case I would be willing to assume the monetary risk, not only for your money but also for the sum that I owe your mother's estate. If your brothers came over and were to remain healthy, they could repay you. I don't think it should be so difficult. Ludvig ought to be able to work his way over to New York. Jalmar could possibly also do some work, thereby saving 50 to 60 *riksdaler*, the same sum it would cost to go overland to this place, which costs about seven or eight dollars to make the journey. One goes from New York to Albany by steamer, from Albany to Buffalo by rail, from Buffalo to Port Washington by steamer across the Great Lakes. I live about a quarter of a Swedish mile from the city. This route will take from 6 to 8 days and will cost about \$7.00 per person. One can also take the railway direct to Milwaukee, which takes four days and costs, I believe, \$ 8.00. From Milwaukee to Port Washington is 28 English miles or four Swedish, and here one can walk. In any case I wish you would write to me as soon as possible and tell me what chances your brothers have of coming over, and I will try to get off a letter with precise information as to how to travel up through the country, which I will endeavor to find out in the meanwhile.

In your letter you tell about your loneliness and yearning to again see us and our children. You must believe it, my dear Fredrik, we also yearn to see you, but we shall live with the hope that God will allow me to live long enough to be able to see the children of my deceased sister here among my own. Look after your brothers and look in on them as often as you can, give them advice and help them and warn them for getting involved in bad company. Ask them to come and visit you on Sundays, procure entertaining and useful books. Read and cultivate your minds and cheer up each other by fulfilling your duties and conducting yourself properly. You will find that time will pass swiftly and you will not find yourselves alone, since God will help and protect you.

Greet all acquaintances and friends and tell Winberg¹⁴ that if he wishes to come to America he can make from 4 to 6 *riksdaler* per day with his own work, that almost everywhere there is a need for good crafts and good markets for wagons

and buggies. It is not much more expensive to live here and a thousand times better opportunity for his children. Also tell him that if he wishes to come to this place, I will help him all I can.

When I left Sweden your mother was owed 450 *riksdaler* by Wetterdahl from Länna as well as a large sum owed to your father by Major Beckman.¹⁵ Please let me know how these sums have been handled. I have nothing further to tell you at this time except to say that we all have our income and somewhat good health, which we also wish for you.

Your loving Uncle
C. G. Stark

I had several books stored with your now deceased mother. If you can find them, please care for them and send them with your brothers.”

The last of the four letters is dated Milwaukee, WI 4 Feb. 1875, written by Ludvig Theodolf Stolhand, to his brother Gustaf Fredrik in Stockholm:

“Beloved Brother Fredrik!

I have the sad news to tell you that aunt Stark died in St. Peter 1 Feb. 1875 of pneumonia and has caused great grief to the girls Thilda, Inez and Mary. She will be buried the fifth of this month. I cannot attend the funeral since the railroads are blockaded by snow.

I have for a long time been waiting for a letter from you. You do not seem to be in a hurry to write to me. Did you receive the portraits of Gustaf, Charles, Herman och Inez Stark, which I sent in a letter to Hjalmar, but never received a reply whether they reached you or not. Let me now see, Brother Fredrik, if you will keep your word and send me yours, Fredrika's and the children's portraits.

My wife sends her respects to you all and wishes to see you some time in Stockholm. I lost a total of \$7,000.00 in gold last fall in wheat speculation (?), but made up the difference in real estate property and steamboat speculation on the Mississippi River. Grain fetches a low price now, only 84 cents a bushel. Money may be had at a discount rate of 8 to 10%.

I suppose you are still with Mr. Bernhardt Almquist¹⁶ and that his business is good. What do you think Brother Fredrik? Would it pay to establish a mutual life insurance company in Stockholm, whereby the policy holders only pay in case of a death among its members? Two years ago such a company was started in Chicago and today it has 29,000 members and have paid out 12 % to its members.

Greet all friends and when you write tell me something about
Stockholm's beautification (?).

Your Loving Brother
L.T. Stolhand¹⁷

618 Eastwater Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A

Notes

¹ Johan Fredrik Stålhand, b. 1804, became a student at the University of Uppsala 1817, being a member of the Stockholm *Nation*. He pursued studies in jurisprudence and was admitted to the Svea Court of Appeals as a lawyer 1823; he became a civil judge (*vice häradshövding*) and died in 1844. He m. Maria Gustafva Stark, b. in Huddinge Parish (Stock.) 28 Feb. 1815. - L.H.Åberg, *Anteckningar om Stockholms nationsförening vid Upsala universitet* (Stockholm 1877), p. 28.

² Carl Gustaf Stark, a former farm renter, received a passport for himself, his wife, Maria Bernhardina Hafström, and five children for travel to North America 10 April 1847. - *Passdiarier 1843-1856, B V:I, Stockholms länsstyrelse* (The Archives of Stockholm County), District Archives of Uppsala (*Uppsala Landsarkiv*).

³ Probably Erik Hedström, master shoemaker, who departed from Stockholm 8 April 1843 with his wife, Christina Charlotta Fritz, and a minor son, Erik Leonard. The family arrived in New York 20 Sept. 1843 and proceeded to northern Illinois, where they settled in Newport, Lake County. - Nils William Olsson, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York 1820-1850* (Stockholm and Chicago 1967) (*SPANY*), pp. 44-45.

⁴ Carl David Arfwedson, b. in Stockholm 25 Nov. 1806, s. of Carl Abraham Arfwedson, wholesale merchant, and Maria af Sandeberg. He made three separate journeys to America and on 10 June 1834 m. in Philadelphia Elizabeth Alice Ashhurst, daughter of Richard Ashhurst, a merchant. Arfwedson published in London in 1834 his excellent description of North America entitled *The United States and Canada 1832, 1833 and 1834*. During the years of 1838-1855 he served as United States consul in Stockholm. He died in Wiesbaden, Germany 25 June 1881. - *SPANY*, p. 9.

⁵ Ludvig Tydén, b. in Stockholm 1807, son of Olof Tydén, textile manufacturer (*klädesfabrikör*) and Lovisa Magdalena Vougt. He became a wholesale merchant in Stockholm and died there 1862. He m. Anna Sophia Erdmann (1806-1847). - Gustaf Elgenstierna, *Svenska släktkalendern*, 1913, p.873; P.A. Huldberg, *Ny adress-kalender och vägvisare inom hufvudstaden Stockholm* (Stockholm 1859), p. 233.

⁶ Henrik Österman was b. in Albäck, Simtuna Parish (Väst.) 6 March 1811, s. of Henrik Österman, textile manufacturer (*klädesfabrikör*), and Maria Fredrika Wigström. He came to Stockholm at an early age, where he started his own business. He encountered financial difficulties and when the climate got too hot for him in Stockholm, he secured a passport 8 Oct. 1846 for travel to Hamburg, Germany and several other foreign countries. He must have gone to America soon thereafter. On 16 Dec. 1846 he was placed in bankruptcy in the Magistrate's Court in Stockholm. On his way to the gold fields in California in the summer of 1849 he was killed by an Indian in a night attack. - Erik Wikén, "The Death of Henrik Österman - A Swedish Argonaut" in *Swedish American Genealogist*, Vol. V, No. 2, June, 1985, pp. 49-51.

⁷ Gustaf Elias Marius Unonius was b. in Helsinki, Finland 25 Aug. 1810, the s. of Israel Unonius, attorney, and Maria Juliana Gardberg. He arr. in America in the fall of 1841 and after failing at farming entered the Episcopal Seminary in Nashotah, WI, where he became the first graduate in 1845. He served several American churches in Wisconsin, before going to Chicago, where in 1849 he founded the St. Ansgarius Scandinavian Episcopal Church. He returned to Sweden in 1858 and d. in Hacksta in Uppland 14 Oct. 1902. - *SPANY*, pp. 38-39.

⁸ Bror Samuel Cassel, a distant relative of Peter Cassel from Kisa Parish (Ög.), who in 1845 founded the first Swedish settlement in Iowa, was b. Kinnarumma Parish (Älvs.) 17 Feb. 1809, s. of Johan Cassel, lieutenant in the Swedish Army, and Edela Larsdotter. He also joined the army and reached the rank of lieutenant in the Royal Älvsborg Regiment. He m. Anna Christina Lindgren, with whom he had three children. According to the household examination rolls for Liared Parish (Älvs.) he is recorded as having absconded, probably to America, 1 May 1846. According to the Census of 1850 he was residing in Port Washington, WI with his wife and four minor children. - Parish records in the District Archives of Göteborg (*Göteborgs landsarkiv*); military records in the Royal Swedish Military Archives (*Kungliga Krigsarkivet*); *Federal Census Records for 1850*, Wisconsin.

⁹ J. Wideqvist operated a spice shop at Götgatan 73 in Stockholm. Stark's letters were usually sent to Wideqvist at his address and then forwarded to Gustafva Stållhand. - *Huldberg* (1859), p.251.

¹⁰ By 1859 G(ustaf) F(redrik) Stållhand was listed as a bookkeeper in Katarina Parish in Stockholm with an address at Högbergsgatan 19. In the 1883 and 1885 Stockholm city directories he is listed as a wholesale merchant with the firm of B. Almquist & Co. In the latter directory he is also listed as the proprietor of the firm. - *Huldberg* (1859), p. 219; *Ibid.*, (1883), p. 198; *Ibid.*, (1885), p. 219.

¹¹ The Swedish monetary system in the 1840s and 1850s was quite confusing. There were three kinds of *riksdaler* - *riksdaler riksmünt* or *specie*, *riksdaler banco* and *riksdaler riksgälds*. Each of the three had a different value. Thus one *riksdaler riksmünt* or *specie* was worth 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ *riksdaler banco* and 4 *riksdaler riksgälds*. Usually in converting *riksdaler* into U.S. currency, the *riksdaler riksgälds* was used which meant an exchange rate of four *riksdaler* to the U.S. dollar.

¹² Richard K. Swift is listed as a pawnbroker in the Chicago city directory for 1839. - Fergus, *Directory of the City of Chicago 1839* (Chicago, reprint 1876), p.32.

¹³ See note 4 above.

¹⁴ Undoubtedly Sven Winberg, a wagonmaker, who resided at Holländaregatan 15 in Stockholm in 1859. - *Huldberg* (1859), p. 253.

¹⁵ Probably Carl Gustaf Olof Beckman, a major in the Swedish Army, b. 1794, who res. in Katarina Parish in Stockholm, his address being Högbergsgatan 25. - *Svenska Arméens anciennitet- tour- och rangrulla 1862* (Stockholm 1862), p. 128; *Huldberg*, (1859), p. 14.

¹⁶ Bernhard Ulric Georg Almquist, wholesale merchant in Stockholm, b in Uppsala 1 Oct 1813, s. of Eric Abraham Almquist, Bishop of the Härnösand Diocese, and Hedvig (Hedda) Martina Wihlborg. He d. in Stockholm 27 April 1881. - (L.M.V. Örnberg), *Svensk släkt-kalender och Svenska ättartal*, I-XIV (Stockholm 1885-1905), V, p.108.

¹⁷ The following additional information concerning L.T. Stolhand has just been received from Harry H. Anderson, Executive Director of the Milwaukee County Historical Society. He writes - "Ludvig (frequently called Louis) Theodolf Stolhand made his appearance in Milwaukee in 1874 (actually, probably late 1873), when he was admitted as a member of the Chamber of Commerce on 16 January 1874 and married on 25 July. The city directories for the rest of the 1870s list him as a commission merchant and/or wheat broker. In April 1880 he was appointed a census enumerator for a part of the City of Milwaukee (while the city directory lists him only as a "laborer"), and in May of the following year he was appointed ward foreman for the 7th Ward. (This is essentially a construction and maintenance position in city government, involving care of streets, sidewalks and other public facilities, and suggest some type of political connection.) In 1885 he unsuccessfully attempted to become a replacement for the superintendent of a major lake front park development project.

Stolhand held the ward foreman's job until 1901, after which for two years, he was a partner in the Southside Cement Sidewalk Company. By 1904 he had become a saloonkeeper. He died 9 May 1905.

Stolhand was married to Louise Theresia (sic!) Seeger in a civil ceremony at his home 25 July 1874. One of his official witnesses was a Robert Lindblom, obviously a Swede, whose occupation at that time was a commission agent. The 1900 Federal Census reveals that the Stolhands then had seven living children (a son, Edward, had died in 1880), as follows : Hilda, b. Aug. 1878; Ulysses R., b. Oct. 1879; Louise M., b. Aug. 1881; Roscoe C., b. April 1883; Isabel C., b. March 1887; Henry L., b. Oct. 1888 and Cara T., b. Sept. 1890. Mrs. Stolhand is not listed in the 1900 household, she may have d. by then, although I have not been able to find her death notice. The 1900 listing also includes a Swedish boarder named Ernest (?) Hallman, b. in March 1860, who had emigr. 1882 and was listed as a day laborer.

Stolhand became a U.S. citizen on 17 Dec. 1895 (somewhat late in life). His record states that he landed in the U.S. 2 April 1865 (or, on another document, 22 June 1866) at San Francisco, CA. His declaration of intent was filed in Nicollet County, MN 2 Aug. 1869."