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Declarations of Intent of Swedes in San Francisco 1851-1880

Nils William Olsson

San Francisco has always held a fascination for Swedish travellers, whether they be goldminers, seafaring people, immigrants or just modern day tourists. It began with an explosion at the time when gold was discovered in California in 1848 and San Francisco changed from a sleepy harbor town to became the main port of entry through which thousands and tens of thousands of gold seekers poured to continue on their way to seek fortunes in the gold fields. Among these were a large number of Swedes who risked their lives rounding the treacherous Cape Horn or else making their way across the malaria infested jungles of Nicaragua and Panama in order to shorten the time for reaching their goal. A few were lucky in the diggings, but a far greater number failed to find their pot of gold, some dying from neglect and disease, but most of those who had received little in pecuniary awards, either returned to Sweden or sought other opportunities in the goldfields of Australia. A few of these hardy argonauts stayed on in California, however, carving out new destinies in whatever field was available, such as operating bars, saloons, hotels, restaurants and laundries. Some were employed in the U.S. Mint in San Francisco.

Sadly we shall never know the exact extent of the influx of Swedes into California late in the 1840s or early 1850s. The valuable ships' manifests of all vessels arriving at the port of San Francisco were lost in a disastrous warehouse fire in that city during World War II. To aggravate this loss is the fact that the San Francisco returns of the U.S. Census of 1850 have also been lost, thus robbing us of any figure showing the presence of Swedes in the city midway through the 19th century. We are therefore forced to use secondary sources, such as information gathered from newspaper accounts, letters, diaries and city directories. Fortunately we are in the possession of one primary source - the records of declarations of intent as well as naturalizations of Swedes in the San Francisco area beginning in 1851. These records represent, among other sources, the declarations of intent by Swedes in the U.S. Circuit Court as well as the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco. These valuable records are now housed in the branch of the National Archives and Records Service in San Bruno, CA.

The present study is an attempt to list all Swedish nationals who declared their intent of becoming U.S. citizens at the two federal courts in San Francisco. Unfortunately the information gleaned from these sources is rather sparse. The only things we get is the name of the petitioner, his nationality, the date of signing the intent and the name of the court. On rare occasions we also get the name of the Swedish community from which the immigrant hailed. These sources are listed under the signum *RG 21* and span the following time periods:

U.S. District Court (DC)	U.S. Circuit Court (CC)
Vol. I (1855-1856)	Vol. I (1851-1856)
Vol. II (1857-1861)	Vol. II (1856-1861)
Vol. III (1861-1867)	Vol. III (1861-1867)
Vol. IV (1869-1876)	Vol. IV (1867-1869)
Vol. V (1876-1880)	Vol. V (1870-1876)
	Vol. VI (1876-1880)

The reference to the ethnic background of the petitioner is always a problem for the researcher working with court records involving Sweden and Norway during the 19th century. The fact that Sweden and Norway were joined in a dual monarchy during most of this time (1814-1905) is often reflected in the reference to the nationality of the person seeking citizenship. Thus Sweden/Norway may refer to a Swede or Norwegian, with the chances being fairly good that the petitioner was Swedish. If he were Norwegian he would have insisted that his nationality be listed as Norway/Sweden. Fortunately in many cases the ethnic background and not the political affiliation holds sway. To be on the safe side, however, all persons listed in these sources, having the double nationality, are shown with the abbreviation (S/N), even though it is obvious that some of the names are Norwegian in origin. Where the reference is solely to Sweden (S) there is no problem. The letter (x) in the entry indicates that the petitioner can neither read nor write.

Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Abrahamson, Thomas	S/N	CC	13 Apr. 1863
Agren, Hans Ulrik	S/N	DC	30 July 1856
Ambjörnsson, Lars G.	S/N	CC	7 Sep. 1868
Anderson, Andreas	S	DC	14 Nov. 1872
Anderson, Andrew	S/N	CC	12 Dec. 1860
Anderson, Andrew	S/N	CC	6 Sep. 1864
Anderson, Andrew Peter	S/N	CC	31 Aug. 1858
Anderson, Fredrick	S	DC	6 Nov. 1876

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Anderson, Gustaf	S/N	DC	14 Aug. 1879
Anderson, Henry Wilhelm	S	DC	11 Oct. 1872
Anderson, John	S/N	DC	3 May 1858
Anderson, John	S/N	DC (x)	28 Sep. 1869
Anderson, John	S	CC	12 Jan. 1874
Anderson, John	S	DC	25 May 1876
Anderson, Olof Alfred	S	DC	17 Mar. 1879
Anderson, Peter	S	CC	20 Mar. 1879
Anderson, Tufve	S	CC	18 Apr. 1871
Andersson, Petter	S/N	CC	30 Nov. 1868
Andreasson, Christian	S/N	CC	5 Sep. 1861
Banks, Jöns Petter	S/N	CC	4 Feb. 1862
Barkley, Charles P.	S/N	DC	5 Nov. 1864
Baxter, John T.	S/N	CC	13 Jan. 1862
Bengtson, Charles	S	DC	20 Aug. 1879
Berg, Peter	S/N	CC	26 Apr. 1864
Bergson, O.	S/N	CC	15 Sep. 1856
Berry, Augustus	S	CC	21 Oct. 1874
Bird, Johannes W.	S	CC	8 Jan. 1879
Blom, Joh[an]	S/N	DC	10 May 1865
Bostrom, Petter	S	CC	19 June 1872
Brock, J. William	S/N	DC	13 Oct. 1876
Brown, Charles Adolph	S	DC	19 Feb. 1876
Brown, John	S/N	CC	7 Dec. 1857
Brown, John	S/N	CC	21 Apr. 1863
Brown, John C.	S/N	CC	13 Oct. 1855
Brown, William	S	CC	1 Mar. 1861
Brun, Andrew I.	S/N	CC (x)	23 Jan. 1862
Brunsborg, Gust	S/N	DC	16 July 1877
Bystedt, John	S	CC	31 Oct. 1876
Callström, Berndt	S/N	CC	6 July 1861
Charleston, Abram	S/N	CC (x)	10 June 1852
Christiansen, Isaac	S/N	CC (x)	7 July 1864
Christianson, Carl	S	DC	25 Oct. 1876
Clausson, Heinrich Nicholas Johan	S	DC	19 Jan. 1871
Clausson, Peter Heinrich Carstenson	S	DC	19 Jan. 1871
Cristh, Johan	S (Göteborg)	CC	20 July 1857
Dahlman, M.W.	S/N	DC	20 Nov. 1869
Danielson, Stian	S/N	CC (x)	9 Mar. 1868

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Deler, Peter	S/N	CC	10 July 1867
Devine, Chr. A.	S	CC	3 Feb. 1859
Devine, P.E.	S/N	DC	15 Sep. 1859
Edwards, Daniel	S/N	DC	3 May 1860
Ekenberg, Hjalmar	S/N	CC	18 July 1864
Emerson, Martin	S/N	CC	5 Jan. 1865
Engleberg, Emil August ¹	S/N	CC	17 May 1852
Erickson, John	S	DC	24 Nov. 1871
Erickson, Larus	S/N	DC (x)	28 Mar. 1867
Erikson, John	S/N	DC	19 Jan. 1880
Evensen, John Nicholas	S/N	CC	8 Jan. 1868
Fahlsten, Charles John Erick ²	S/N	DC	6 Mar. 1867
Fairfield, Marshall	S/N	CC	15 June 1865
Forsberg, F.	S	CC	27 Apr. 1871
Freeman, Per Enoch	S (Arboga)	CC	30 Mar. 1870
Goodrich, John	S/N	CC	13 Apr. 1852
Goranson, Otto	S	DC	14 Aug. 1878
Grundle, Axel M.	S/N	DC	19 May 1879
Gulliksen, Ole	S/N	DC	15 Sep. 1869
Gumbinner, Sven	S (Göteborg)	CC	7 May 1869
Gustafson, Nils	S/N	CC	22 July 1868
Hague, Charles J.	S/N	CC	29 June 1867
Haken, Olof	S	DC	20 Oct. 1869
Halvorson, Alak	S/N	DC	12 Jan. 1880
Hansen, Christen	S/N	CC	28 Feb. 1868
Hansen, Hans	S/N	CC	26 Dec. 1851
Hansen, Peter	S/N	CC (x)	15 Dec. 1860
Hanson, Alexander	S/N	DC	11 Jan. 1860
Hansson, B.H.	S	CC	2 Apr. 1872
Hedberg, August	S	DC	22 Aug. 1876
Heijm, Charles	S (Stockholm)	CC	2 Mar. 1858
Henderson, Arthur	S/N	DC (x)	10 Mar. 1858
Henrickson, Olaus	S	DC	9 Sep. 1873
Hörnström, Franz Zacharias	S/N	CC	24 Jan. 1856
Holden, Charles A.	S/N	CC	3 Sep. 1867
Holden, John A.	S/N	CC	3 Sep. 1867
Holm, Johan	S	DC	20 Aug. 1879
Hoof, Gustaf	S/N	CC	14 Nov. 1867

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Hougan, Peter O.	S/N	DC	22 Dec. 1869
Housken, George	S/N	CC	31 Aug. 1861
Hultberg, Axel Gustaf	S	DC	14 Feb. 1871
Hunter, James C.	S	CC	18 Sep. 1874
Jackson, Johan	S/N	DC	11 Nov. 1864
Jackson, William	S/N	CC	3 July 1863
Jacobsen, Marcus Severin	S/N	CC	16 Mar. 1852
Jacobson, Swen	S	DC	25 June 1870
Janson, Lars	S	DC	8 Aug. 1879
Jansson, Charles Peter	S	DC	7 Oct. 1878
Jansson, Magnus Engelbert	S	CC	27 Jan. 1871
Jensen, Henry	S/N	DC	1 May 1865
Johanson, Peter L.	S/N	DC	6 Feb. 1880
Johnsen, Christian	S/N	DC	9 Oct. 1856
Johnsen, Edward	S/N	DC	23 Nov. 1880
Johnson, Albert	S/N	DC	22 Jan. 1880
Johnson, Alexander	S	CC	1 Feb. 1859
Johnson, Anders F.	S/N	CC (x)	9 Apr. 1869
Johnson, Andrew	S	CC (x)	10 Nov. 1859
Johnson, Eric	S	CC	10 Apr. 1876
Johnson, James August	S	DC	29 May 1873
Johnson, John	S	CC (x)	6 July 1860
Johnson, John Frederick	S/N	CC	3 Sep. 1861
Johnson, Martin	S	DC	2 Mar. 1880
Johnson, Nils Peter	S	DC	29 Oct. 1870
Johnson, William	S/N	DC	1 Mar. 1858
Kallstrom, Herman Edward Julius	S/N	DC	No date given
Kjellgren, Edward W.	S/N	DC	9 June 1879
Kjelsen, Peter Andreas	S/N	DC	22 Mar. 1877
Kollenburg, Albert	S/N	CC	9 Feb. 1854
Kristenson, Jöns	S	DC	12 June 1876
Landgren, Frank O.	S/N	DC	24 Oct. 1876
Larsen, Hans Christian	S/N	CC	2 June 1862
Larsen, Peter	S	CC	12 May 1857
Larson, John	S	DC	31 Aug. 1880
Larson, Peter William	S	DC	1 Feb. 1876
Lassen, George	S/N	CC (x)	11 Dec. 1860

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Lawson, John	S/N	DC	7 Dec. 1859
Lindahl, Johan Martin	S/N	DC	28 Feb. 1860
Lindström, Erik Johan	S/N	DC	15 Mar. 1876
Linros, C.M.	S/N	CC	7 Aug. 1856
Lohman, Herman Thure	S (Stockholm)	CC	24 Feb. 1870
Lund, Johan Fredrik	S	CC	20 Oct. 1880
Lund, Ole Werner	S/N	CC	1 July 1854
Lundgren, Anders Johan	S/N	DC	27 Feb. 1861
Lundquist, L.T.	S	CC	21 Aug. 1871
Lundstedt, John P.	S/N	DC	31 Dec. 1861
Lundstrom, Charles	S	CC	11 Nov. 1878
Lynn, Charles	S	DC	22 Aug. 1876
Lyon, James	S (Stockholm)	CC	17 Nov. 1859
Månson, A.	S	CC	1 Feb. 1859
Malde, Andre	S/N	DC	7 July 1879
Melen, A.	S (Kalmar)	CC	4 Oct. 1860
Michaelsen, Rasmus Tobias	S/N	DC	12 Nov. 1869
Miller, Charles G.	S/N	CC	21 Oct. 1864
Miller, William	S/N	CC	8 Oct. 1855
Monsen, Carl F.	S/N	CC	6 Apr. 1863
Morvad, John Adams	S/N	DC	11 July 1860
Nelson, Edward	S/N	DC (x)	25 Jan. 1862
Nelson, Gunerius R.	S/N	DC	28 Oct. 1857
Nelson, James	S/N	DC	22 Feb. 1858
Nilson, Sven Peter	S	CC	31 Jan. 1879
Nilsson, C.E.	S	CC	22 Jan. 1873
Nilsson, S.E.	S (Västervik)	DC	13 Feb. 1871
Nisser, Pedro	S/N	CC	18 Sep. 1857
Nordman, Edward	S (Stockholm)	CC	26 Dec. 1874
Nyberg, Israel	S/N	DC	19 Oct. 1869
Nystrom, John Magnus	S/N	CC	2 Oct. 1855
Oberg, Oscar Frithiof	S/N	CC	27 Oct. 1868
Ohlson, Anders P.	S/N	DC	29 Aug. 1862
Ohman, John	S/N	DC	16 Sep. 1862
Ohman, John	S/N	CC	20 July 1864
Olofson, Peter	S/N	CC	19 Dec. 1862
Olsen, O.C.	S/N	DC	27 Oct. 1864
Olsen, Thorwald	S/N	CC	10 May 1869
Olson, Johannes	S/N	CC	8 June 1868

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Olson, Samuel	S	DC	11 Mar. 1874
Oman, Charles	S	CC (x)	31 Oct. 1876
Osberg, Charles	S/N	CC (x)	3 Sep. 1867
Oster, Peter H.	S	CC	3 Sep. 1859
Osterman, Andre	S	CC	No date given
Palmer, John	S	DC	5 May 1879
Palmstream, P.G.	S (Göteborg)	CC	3 Feb. 1857
Parson, Anders	S	DC	1 Apr. 1861
Pedersen, Berthinus	S/N	CC	6 Nov. 1865
Pehrsson, Lars	S	DC	13 Apr. 1870
Petersen, John	S/N	CC	3 July 1867
Petersen, Peter	S/N	CC (x)	1 Sep. 1863
Peterson, Augus[t]	S	CC	20 July 1874
Peterson, Carl	S	DC	15 Mar. 1876
Peterson, Charles	S	CC	25 Mar. 1871
Peterson, Charles	S	DC	24 Aug. 1874
Peterson, Charles Peter	S/N	CC	15 Nov. 1862
Peterson, Henry	S/N	CC	19 May 1862
Peterson, Johan	S	CC	9 Dec. 1870
Peterson, John	S/N	CC	3 Aug. 1868
Peterson, Peter	S/N	CC (x)	21 Sep. 1868
Peterson, Peter	S	DC	22 May 1875
Peterson, Peter A.	S (Kalmar)	CC	29 Sep. 1860
Petterson, Andrew	S	DC	22 Jan. 1870
Petterson, Edward	S/N	DC	28 Jan. 1880
Petterson, Israel	S	DC	15 Feb. 1870
Petterson, Jacob Nicolaus	S	DC	26 Apr. 1880
Petterson, John	S (Oskarshamn)	CC	7 Aug. 1871
Petterson, John	S	CC	5 May 1874
Petterson, John N.	S/N	CC	2 Sep. 1861
Ramsey, Niels	S/N	CC	16 Apr. 1862
Rander, Herman	S	DC	21 Dec. 1871
Rasmusen, Ole	S/N	CC (x)	28 Jan. 1865
Ringdahl, Magnus	S/N	DC	23 Oct. 1869
Robinson, Charles	S/N	CC	11 Oct. 1867
Rosenberg, Otto Wilhelm	S/N	CC	1 Oct. 1855
Rosenlund, Albert	S	DC	21 July 1879
Rothstein, Victor ³	S	CC	21 Jan. 1860
Sandberg, A.	S/N	CC	28 June 1869

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Name	Nationality	Court	Date
Sandberg, Pehr A.	S	DC	17 Aug. 1872
Sanders, Charles	S/N	CC	17 Mar. 1869
Schröder, C.	S/N	DC	5 Sep. 1861
Smart, Isaac	S/N	CC (x)	17 Oct. 1854
Smith, George	S/N	CC (x)	18 Dec. 1860
Smith, James	S/N	CC	26 Sep. 1868
Smith, John	S	DC (x)	25 Oct. 1872
Smith, Peter	S /N	CC	19 Apr. 1869
Sodergren, Frans Otto	S	DC	4 Jan. 1881
Soderquist, Andrew Olof	S	DC	20 Jan. 1879
Söderqvist, Ernst Fredrik	S/N	CC	5 Mar. 1868
Souther, Adolph Fredrick	S/N	DC	18 Nov. 1859
Souther, Adolph Fredrik	S/N	CC	17 Sep. 1860
Southerberg, C.S.	S/N	CC	27 Oct. 1860
Spencer, Richard	S/N	CC (x)	7 Nov. 1864
Stattin, Israel	S	DC	29 Jan. 1876
Sten, Adolph	S	DC	6 Feb. 1879
Stenbom, Charles W.	S	CC	2 May 1870
Stenman, Adam	S	CC (x)	21 Aug. 1871
Stevens, Peter	S/N	CC	21 May 1862
Stiboldt, Valentine	S/N	CC	18 May 1866
Stromberg, Nicholas	S/N	CC	9 Mar. 1864
Stromdahl, Gustaf F.	S/N	CC (x)	23 Jan. 1862
Strutz, Andrew	S/N	CC	28 Jan. 1863
Sullivan, Charles	S/N	DC	8 Nov. 1858
Svendsen, Christian	S/N	CC	14 July 1853
Svenson, Andreas	S	CC	19 June 1858
Swenson, Andrew	S	DC	12 Aug. 1871
Swenson, Carl J.	S	CC	21 Aug. 1876
Swenson, Christian Severin	S/N	CC	22 Aug. 1859
Sydow, Daniel Johan ⁴	S/N	CC	1 Oct. 1855
Tengwall, Charles	S/N	DC	1 May 1860
Thompson, Chas.	S/N	CC	3 June 1864
Thompson, Emanuel	S/N	CC	14 Dec. 1867
Thompson, Herman	S	CC	1 Oct. 1868
Thompson, John	S/N	DC	12 Mar. 1858
Thompson, John	S/N	CC	19 May 1862
Thornquist, Gustaf	S/N	CC	1 Aug. 1868
Torresen, Tobias	S/N	DC	31 Aug. 1877

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Trondson, Tomas	S/N	DC	15 Oct. 1880
Turgersen, Paul	S	DC	25 July 1879
Ulin, Erick	S	CC	22 Jan. 1870
Wahlquist, Fredrik	S/N	DC	4 Aug. 1860
Wahlstrom, Lars Johan	S/N	DC	26 Nov. 1869
Wallgren, Joseph L.	S/N	CC	23 May 1865
Wandsjö, Peder A. Bryngelsen	S/N	DC	10 May 1860
West, Charles	S	CC	14 Nov. 1860
West, Otto M.	S/N	CC	3 Nov. 1862
Westelius, Peter Frederick	S/N	CC	5 Mar. 1853
Westerdahl, Peter	S	CC	8 Dec. 1873
Wikstrom, Augustus F.	S	DC	20 Dec. 1878
Williams, John	S	DC	24 July 1875
Williamson, Martin	S/N	CC	23 Sep. 1868
Wilson, Charles	S/N	CC	28 Jan. 1858
Wilson, Charles S.	S/N	DC	28 Feb. 1867
Wilson, Francis	S	DC	27 Mar. 1876
Wilson, Johan	S	CC	25 Sep. 1872
Wilson, John	S/N	DC (x)	23 Oct. 1855
Wilson, John	S/N	CC	14 Dec. 1865
Wilson, Richard	S (Stockholm)	CC	17 Nov. 1856
Wilson, William	S/N	CC (x)	11 June 1868
Wilson, William	S/N	DC	22 Nov. 1869
Winter, Charles	S/N	CC	23 June 1856
Young, Andrew	S	DC	29 Dec. 1874

Notes

¹August Emil Engelberg, b. in Borås 4 April 1821, s. Johan Engelberg, chamois manufacturer (*sämskmakare*), and Eva Sohlhem. He arr. in New York 26 Feb. 1846 aboard the *Victoria* out of London. In America he reversed his Christian names, calling himself Emil August. He enlisted in New York City 1 Aug. 1846 as a private in Co. F of the First New York Volunteer Regiment (later the Seventh U.S. Regiment), seeing service in California and in the War with Mexico. He sailed around Cape Horn aboard the *Thomas H. Perkins* and arr. in San Francisco 6 March 1847, being one of the first Swedes to set foot in that city. He was given an honorable discharge at Santa Barbara, CA 8 Sept 1848. After trying his luck in the gold fields of Eldorado County he came back to San Francisco, where he became part owner of a grocery store, later a bakery and a coffee shop. A s., E.A. Engelberg, was living in Sonoma, CA in 1910. - Nils William Olsson, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York*, pp. 68-69.

² Carl Johan Eric Fahlsten was in all probability b. in Bro Parish (Gotl.) in 1823. He signed on board the Swedish frigate *Oscar* as an apprentice seaman, participating in the Oxehufvud Expedition to South America 1840-1841. After his return to Sweden he signed on board a Swedish merchantman in Stockholm 2 Sept. 1846, but jumped ship in New York already in December of that year. He ultimately made his way to California, where he took part in the gold rush. He later settled down as an innkeeper and wine merchant in San Francisco, where he also went by the name of Edwards. He was a charter member of the Scandinavian Society of San Francisco founded 28 Feb. 1859. When he d. he left a considerable fortune, which was inherited by a couple of sisters back in Gotland. - Stockholm City Archives; August Wetterman, *The History and Review of the Scandinavian Society of San Francisco* (Manuscript in the Library of the University of California); Axel Paulin, *Oxehufvud - en svensk viking* (Stockholm 1947), p. 306; *Gotlands läns tidning*, 26 March 1852; information courtesy Dr. Erik Wikén, Uppsala.

³ Fredrik Edvard Rothstein, clerk, b. in Börrum Parish (Ög.) 22 Aug. 1822, s. Jonathan Rothstein, sheriff (*kronolänsman*), and Hedvig Catharina Seurling. He received passport in Stockholm 21 April 1843 and arr. in New York 6 June aboard the *Hindoo*. In 1850 he was living in Eldorado County, CA. Later he moved to Clinton, IA. - Olsson, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals*, pp. 44-45.

⁴ Daniel Johan von Sydow, b. in Klara Parish, Stockholm 15 Jan. 1817, s. Axel Reinhold von Sydow, deputy governor of Stockholm County (*underståthållare*), and Anna Catharina Carling. For a time he was employed as a bookkeeper (*bruksbokhållare*) but on 22 May 1849 he volunteered in the Danish Army in its war with Schleswig-Holstein. On 11 July 1850 he received a passport in Stockholm for travel to California, arr. in San Francisco in June 1851 aboard the *Donna Maria*. He worked in the gold fields and apparently d. in California. - Gustaf Elgenstierna, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, VIII, p.101; Birger Schöldström, *Svenskarne under Dannebrogen*, p. 89; Stockholm County Passports, Stockholm City Archives (*Stadsarkivet*).

Gerhard Brandt Næseth 1913-1994

Gerhard Brandt Næseth, internationally known expert on Norwegian genealogy and early Norwegian immigration to the U.S., died in Madison, WI 10 June 1994 after a long illness.

Mr. Næseth's career spanned more than forty years as librarian, ending as Associate Director of Libraries at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He retired as full professor in 1978. In that year he became the administrator of the Vesterheim Genealogical Center and Næseth Library, first in his home and later at 415 W. Main Street, Madison.

As family historian he became interested in early Norwegian immigration and spent several decades studying passenger lists, church records, cemetery tombstones, newspapers and census records to document the 18,000 Norwegian immigrants who reached the U.S. 1825-1850. In 1993 he published the first volume covering Norwegian immigration during this period. (See Prof. Odd Lovoll's review of Mr. Næseth's first volume on pages 149-150 of this issue.)