

9-1-1994

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Recommended Citation

Merkley, Ejvor (1994) "Using the Estate Inventory (Bouppteckning) to Solve a Genealogical Problem," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 14 : No. 3 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol14/iss3/6>

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Using the Estate Inventory (*Bouppteckning*) to Solve a Genealogical Problem

Ejvor Merkley*

(I am submitting this study to illustrate how important it is to check all available Swedish sources in attempting to solve a genealogical problem dealing with a Swedish forebear. In this particular case I wish to show how, when everything else failed, the estate inventory (*bouppteckning*) helped solve my problem.)

When my brother Egon visited Sweden in the early 1950s he went to the District Archives in Vadstena to try to get information on our paternal grandmother's mother's line. He knew that she was named Christina Lovisa Waller and that she was born in Appuna Parish (Ög.) 6 April 1820. He soon found her birth entry in the parish register, where her parents were listed as Magnus Waller and Christina Larsdotter. Using the same parish records he found that Magnus Waller was born in Bjälbo Parish (Ög.) 24 Sept. 1777. He also traced Christina Larsdotter and found that she was born in Hogstad Parish (Ög.) 3 Jan. 1781, the daughter of a soldier named Lars Wallensten and his wife Ingeborg Jonsdotter. That was the end of the information on her.

When microfilms became available at the LDS Library, I began trying to find more information on the second great grandmother of ours, Christina Larsdotter. Using the Hogstad parish records I located the marriage of her parents. Lars Wallensten married Ingeborg Jonsdotter 26 Dec. 1779 and their daughter Christina was born 3 Jan. 1781. Unfortunately the earliest household examination roll for Hogstad did not begin until 1811 and in checking every name in this first church examination roll I did not find Lars Wallensten nor Ingeborg Jonsdotter. Beginning in 1781, the year of Christina's birth, I examined every birth and death date up to 1811 as recorded in the Hogstad parish registers and found nothing -- no mention of the Wallensten name.

I then tried Bjälbo Parish since it was here that Christina Larsdotter married Magnus Waller (also spelled Valler) 2 Oct. 1802. The household examina-

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tion rolls for Bjälbo begin in 1747 so I checked all the names recorded there after the birth of Christina in 1781. I also checked the records of Appuna Parish where Christina and her husband, Magnus Waller, resided after 1810 and made a copy of every page in the household examination roll, where she and her husband appear, hoping that some clue could develop from this method which might lead me back to her parents. Over the years I had great success following my other lines but every once in a while I would go back to the Wallensten line and try to solve it.

In my research I found out that Magnus Waller had also gone by the name of Kjällström and that he had married twice after Christina had died. His second wife also died, having had no children, but his third wife, Maja Stina Pehrsson, had three children, giving him a total of eleven children. His last child, Adolph Fridolph Waller, was born in 1842 when Magnus was 65 years old. Maja Stina was 28 years younger, having been born in 1805.

From the Military Archives in Stockholm I received the following information: "Magnus Kjällström had enlisted in 1799 (possibly in 1800) and was assigned to No. 118 Bjälbo, Skänninge Company of the Second Life Grenadier Regiment. On 23 May 1810, Magnus Waller, a former prisoner of war, was given No. 99 Valla in the same Skänninge Company and where he changed his name to Valler (or Waller). He retired as a corporal in 1837 and the military rolls cite him as 'unable to fulfill his military service due to old age and a frail body.' He had taken part in military campaigns from 1805 to 1814 and during this time had become a prisoner of war. He has a distinguished service record and was awarded a medal for bravery. He has asked for and has received an honorable discharge and a pension."

This was of great interest to me and I would love to know more about my second great grandfather's experiences as a prisoner of war. But it did not help me find the records of his father-in-law. By this time almost forty years had gone by since my brother Egon first had discovered the Wallensten line. I had almost given up hope of ever solving the puzzle as to who he and his wife were.

In the summer of 1993 I decided to give the problem one more try and while going over my Wallensten notes a light dawned. Christina Larsson, wife of Magnus Waller and daughter of Lars Wallensten, had died leaving minor children! If her estate inventory (*bouppteckning*) had survived, under Swedish law, one of her relatives would have been named guardian of her underage children and if I could trace that relative, the trail might lead me to her parents. Many of these estate inventories, recorded after a person died, have been lost but many have also survived and I went about finding out if this was the case of Christina Larsson. Those that have survived have been microfilmed and are to be found in the *Family*

History Library Catalog at the local LDS library. Since Christina Larsdotter had died in 1822 I checked the catalog and under the heading Probate Records (*bouppteckningar*) for Östergötland, Göstring *Härad* (Hundred) I ordered microfilm No. 0,151,183, which would have the inventories for the time period covering Christina Larsdotter's death date.

Imagine my pleasant surprise when I found the following record in translation:

“On 8 July 1822 an estate inventory was held after Christina Appelgren, the wife of Corporal Magnus Waller at Valla, who had died 3 July and had left as survivors, her husband, a widower, and six children, three sons and three daughters. Guardianship for the minor children was awarded Sergeant Appelgren and Mr. Persson, farm owner.”

Christina Larsdotter's father, Lars Wallensten, had changed his name to Appelgren and then I remembered that somewhere in my notes I had information on a Lars Appelgren! I found that in the household examination roll for Appuna Parish for 1809-1816 Christina and her husband, Magnus Waller, were listed on the same page as a Lars Appelgren and his wife Ingeborg Jonsdotter and their daughter Fredrika, born in Appuna in 1782. I had done a search for these people in the household examination roll. When I traced Lars Appelgren back to the household examinations for 1802-1815 I found that his wife's name was listed as Ingrid Nilsson and that in the roll for 1797-1801 it was still Ingrid Nilsson. I then checked the Appuna Parish register of births for Fredrika and it showed that her parents were Lars Appelgren and his wife Ingrid Nilsson residing at Valla.

Wondering if our Ingeborg Jonsdotter might have been a second wife of Lars Appelgren, her husband, Lars Wallensten having died, I then checked the death records of Appuna Parish for an Ingrid Nilsson but did not find her. I then checked the Appuna Parish marriage records to see if Ingeborg and Lars had been married there but found no record. Since I found nothing to link my Christina Larsdotter to the Ingeborg Jonsdotter, who appeared to have been the second wife of Lars Appelgren, I had filed the information and gone on to other research.

From reading Christina's estate inventory I knew that she had to fit in with the Lars Appelgren of the 1809-1816 household examination roll. I had to have the answer, since if my Ingeborg Jonsdotter was the second wife of Lars Appelgren, it still would not explain her daughter's going with the surname Appelgren. I decided that Lars Appelgren must be her father and that the parish recorder had made a mistake in the two volumes of the household examination rolls

and the birth entry. I had found mistakes in recording vital statistics before, but not three mistakes in the same family. The only way to prove it was to find Lars Appelgren's estate inventory and hope that Christina was mentioned in that document. I therefore checked the household examination rolls until I found the death entries for both Lars Appelgren and his wife. He died in 1824, his wife in 1815.

Now I had to hope that the estate inventory had been microfilmed and that it would lead to my Christina even though she had died two years before Lars Appelgren. I found that it had been microfilmed and when I read it I became so excited that I wanted to shout! Here are the contents in translation:

“On 22 April 1824 a request was received from the estate of Valla in Appuna Parish for a legal inventory (*bouppteckning*) after Lars Appelgren, sergeant, who died 9 April. Surviving him and his deceased former wife, Ingeborg Jonsdotter, are one son and three daughters as well as six of his daughters' children. The names of his children are as follows - a son, Lars Appelgren, whereabouts unknown; **his daughter Stina (Christina), deceased, but formerly married to Corporal Magnus Waller**; a daughter Fredrika, married to Petter Wistedt, a life grenadier; a daughter Greta married to Petter Jonsson, a carpenter, residing in Marstad, Bjälbo Parish (Ög.) and a daughter Anna Maja, married to Jonas Bergstedt, a life grenadier, residing at Lagmansberga, Allhelgona Parish (Ög.).”

I still don't know why the parish clerk entered Lars' wife as Ingrid Nilsdotter in the records. The answer may lie in the fact that a former soldier, also named Appelgren, had a wife named Ingrid Nilsdotter. Whatever the reason, I now know that Lars Appelgren is my third great grandfather. He was born in Appuna Parish 11 Dec. 1754, the son of Sven Månsson and Kirstin Hansdotter. He is found in the records with three names - Svensson, Wallensten and Appelgren.

An inquiry to the Military Archives in Stockholm elicited this response - “Lars Wallensten was accepted in the cavalry as an ordinary horseman assigned No. 100 in the Skänninge Company of the Östgöta Cavalry (later becoming the Second Life Grenadier Regiment) on 24 June 1778. He was 5 feet, 8 inches tall. In 1799 he became a corporal and changed his name to Appelgren. After this he became a sergeant. On 1 May 1817 he was promoted to staff sergeant in charge of arms and equipment. Soon after this he retired from military service.”

After a search spanning forty years ... finally success. The estate inventory (*bouppteckning*) was the document that tied all my records together.