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# Uncle in Sweden and Nephew in America

Elisabeth Thorsell\*

During a short visit to Lindstrom in Chisago County, MN during the fall of 1995 I had the opportunity of visiting the Antique Mall on the city's Main Street. Since Lindstrom is well-known as a Swedish center I was looking for items having a Swedish provenance. There were a few old books, some postal cards and a coffee pot of typical Swedish model, but nothing that really excited me. Then I saw a bunch of letters in a glass case which were for sale. It consisted of a collection of documents which had belonged to a farmer in Almelund in Chisago County, among which was a letter from Sweden, which I acquired and brought back home

The letter was addressed to "Herr P.J. Svensson, Almelund, Chikago, Minesota, North Amerika" and had obviously been mailed without postage from Urshult in the county of Kronoberg, carrying its postal cancellation but the stamp was American, ten cents, and the envelope was stamped "due 10 cents."

The contents of the letter were not overly exciting but created, nevertheless, a certain curiosity. Translated into English it follows below.

"Esbjörnåmåla 15 Dec. 1899

As an answer to your very welcome letter which I have received from you, in which I perceive that you have not received any letter in a long time, despite the fact that I have mailed letters to you, I am wondering what has been happening. But for a long time I have not been able to write because of my frail health. My age is far advanced and my infirmities are many, my dear Svensson. You will have to excuse me for delaying writing to you, but I have not been able to, dear Svensson. I received the letter from Joh Larsson (?) in Esbjörnåmåla 12 Dec. 1899, in which I learned of your good health, which is a prized possession here in this world and in our lives, dear Svensson. You must believe that I am very frail now, my eyesight is almost gone causing me difficulties for the most part, so you must believe that old age carries with it a host of problems, but one must accept one's lot. It would be fine if the Lord would give us a better life after this, but we must have faith in the Lord who is all powerful over all created beings in the whole world. May God give us a better life after this. My dear Svensson, I can tell you that the trial is over, but there was nothing for you. All the provisions of the will were locked in, thus it

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was the clergyman in Kalvsvik who was unjust. They were all unjust, dear Svensson. You must believe me that I walked great distances in vain, since I believed in justice, but they were wealthy and did as they pleased. My dear Svensson, finally I wish to ask you to help me with a few kronor. You have always been kind to me and you have a good heart. I cannot thank you enough for your kindness to me and God will reward you, my dear Svensson. My infirmities are many but I must accept them to the end. I have nothing further to relate to you except to say that my wife is very frail at times.

With a friendly greeting from Your Uncle  
Adam Johansson

Joh Svensson, the farm owner, greets you warmly. You are also greeted by my children who live in the vicinity. I also wish to tell you that we now are having a fine winter. Don't neglect to send us a letter. I will answer if I am still alive."

Who was Adam Johansson and who was "My dear Svensson?" The next thing was to go to the parish records for Urshult and attempt to find Adam in Esbjörnåla and see if he had a nephew named P.J. Svensson?

In Urshult AI:35, which goes up to 1895, the last one in the archives, we find an entry on p. 8 for Esbjörnåla:

<i>Adam Johansson</i> , crofter,	b. 25 March 1820 in Urshult
Johanna Sofia Johansdotter, wife,	b. 23 June 1827 in Hovmantorp
Anna Lovisa, daughter,	b. 2 April 1864 in Urshult
Her illegitimate dau. Ellen Matilda,	b. 27 June 1893 in " " , d. 2 Sept. 1893
Gustaf Algot, foster son,	b. 21 Jan. 1889

They res. at a croft, Bokelund, which belonged to Adolf Bengtsson at the farm.

Anna Lovisa m. 6 Oct. 1894 Johan Magni Petersson, a widower from Elmehult Västergård, b. in Urshult 17 Feb. 1861. They had the following children:

Hulda Teresia, daughter,	b. 16 Dec. 1894
Salomon Erland, son,	b. 14 Feb. 1896
Axel Gunnar, son,	b. 13 Nov. 1897

Gustaf Algot, the foster son, was a grandchild and was the son of Ida Catharina Adamsdotter, b. 26 June 1855.

### *Adam's parents and siblings*

According to the birth records Adam was b. 25 March, 1820, bapt. 31 March in Folaboda soldier's croft, the son of Johan Trög, dragoon, and his wife, Hanna Pers-

dotter. Johan Trög belonged to the Småland Light Dragoon Regiment.

According to the household examination roll he had the following family:

Johan Trög,	b. 17 Dec. 1777 in Klasamåla, Urshult
Hanna Persdotter, wife,	b. 23 July 1779 in Almundsryd
Anders, son,	b. 15 Oct. 1809 in Urshult
Elsa, daughter,	b. 12 June 1812 " "
Sven, son,	b. 3 July 1815 " "
Peter, son,	b. 13 Dec. 1817 " "
Adam, son,	b. 25 March 1820 " "

In 1822 Johan was given his discharge and he moved to the soldier's croft No. 100, a part of Västerbotorp Storegård, but already that fall the family moved to Nybygget, a part of the Berg farm. The family expands with

Eva, daughter,	b. 31 May 1822, d. 28 May 1828
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Johan Trög d. in the pensioner's croft at Berg 11 May 1835. He was then very frail. His widow stayed on in the croft until her death 27 Nov. 1859.

*Sven*, the son, moved around to various locations in Urshult 1830-1841, but in the latter year he moved to *Kalvsvik*, where he res. at Bokudden, a part of Kläckinge farm. He m. Christina Olofsdotter, b. 27 March 1821 in Kalvsvik, d. 2 Sept. 1843, with whom he had a son, Peter Johan, b. 7 March 1842.

In 1850 Sven remarried Elin Olofsdotter, b. 4 Jan. 1805 and in 1861 he, his wife Elin, and son Peter Johan moved to Kläckinge, where Sven d. 26 March 1863.

*Peter Johan*, the son, m. 10 May 1867 Ingrid Maria Petersdotter, b. 13 Nov. 1838 in Vederslöv. They had a child:

Christina, daughter	b. 2 Sept. 1868; d. 20 Dec. 1868
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*Peter Johan* and his wife emigr. 21 April 1869 to the U.S. with 38 others from Kalvsvik, while one person emigr. to Germany.

#### *Adam's children*

During the years 1835-1850 Adam moved to various locations in Urshult but after his marriage 1849 he settled in Bokelund, a croft in Esbjörnåla, where he and wife watched their children grow up:

Peter Johan, son,	b. 7 Aug. 1849; d. 6 Dec. 1851
Christina, daughter	b. 24 May 1852

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Ida Catharina, daughter	b. 26 June 1855
Johan August, son,	b. 18 Aug. 1858; d. 23 Aug. 1858
Peter Johan, son,	b. 12 Nov. 1859
Anna Lovisa, daughter,	b. 2 April 1864

Christina, the daughter, m. 20 April 1878 Peter Persson, b. 28 June 1832 and moved to Bokelund temporarily before moving permanently in 1878 to Froaryd Norregård, also in Urshult. They had the following children:

Peter Oskar, son,	b. 12 Sept 1878
Ida Karolina, daughter,	b. 16 March 1880
Anna Mathilda, daughter	b. 8 Dec. 1882; d. 6 Feb. 1883
Anna Mathilda, daughter	b. 11 June 1884
Carl Johan, son,	b. 16 Oct. 1885; d. 9 May 1889
Gustaf Algot, son,	b. 16 June 1888; d. 16 May 1889
Emma Teresia, daughter,	b. 25 Sept. 1892

Christina's children Peter Oskar and Ida Carolina spent the summer and fall of 1897 in Denmark, but returned home at the end of the year.

*Ida Catharina*, the daughter, moved to Jät in 1874 but came home from Väckelsång in 1885. She had an illegitimate child after having worked for a time in Norrland and moved to Degerfors in northern Sweden 1890.

*Peter Johan*, the son, moved in 1875 to Esbjörnåmåla and in 1880 to Väckelsång. From there he moved to Elofshult, where his sister Ida Catharina also lived for a time. In 1882 Peter Johan moved to Kvarnamåla and in 1884 to Carlsnäs, a part of the Gängeskulla farm. He married 28 Dec. 1883 Albertina Johannesdotter, b. 17 Sept. 1861 in Väckelsång. In 1885 they moved to Torstarp, a part of the Kåranäs farm and had the following children:

Carl Johan Algot, son,	b. 7 Oct. 1885
Ellen Johanna, daughter,	b. 30 Sept. 1887
Hilma Carolina, daughter,	b. 20 May 1889

On 19 Sept. 1889 Peter Johan and his family moved to Högbo in Gävleborg County. Anna Lovisa, the daughter, moved to Väckelsång in 1881 but returned home again 1890.

### *What happened to Peter Johan?*

It is apparent that *Peter Johan*, the son of Sven, was the recipient of the letter, and the farmer in Almelund. What do we know about him? Did he have additional children in the new land, after his firstborn had died during the difficult years in Sweden at the end of the 1860s?

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We find the answers in the parish records of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Almelund, founded in 1877.

Peter Johan and his wife resided in the Second District (*rote*) and had arr. in Almelund 21 May 1893, coming from Center City, also in Chisago County. Peter Johan d. in Almelund 16 March 1929 and his wife 22 Oct. 1911. The following children were born after their emigration:

Amanda, daughter,	b. 6 March 1871 in Chisago Lake
Albertina, daughter,	b. 21 Oct. 1874 " "
Carl Edvin, son,	b. 14 Feb. 1878 " " , d. 29 Sept. 1936

*Amanda*, the daughter, m. 10 Oct. 1900 Johannes Almqvist, b. in Drev 5 May 1867. They were also members of the Almelund congregation. Johannes d. in Almelund 18 March 1929 and his wife 1 April 1948. Their children were:

Carl Johan, son,	b. 11 Jan 1904 in Almelund
Amanda Maria Elisabeth, daughter,	b. 9 Nov. 1905 " "
Lillie Esther Victoria, daughter,	b. 28 Aug. 1909 " "

*Albertina*, the second daughter, m. 5 April 1900 Johan Adam Sjöberg, b. in Åseda 13 Feb. 1875 and emigr. 1883. They belonged to the Almelund parish. Johan Adam d. there 20 Jan. 1937 and his wife 2 Jan. 1945. Their children were:

Ebba Maria Sofia, daughter,	b. 17 May 1902 in Almelund, d. 24 Nov. 1903
John Clifton, son,	b. 27 June 1906 " "
Chester Gilbert, son,	b. 13 Sept. 1910 " "

*Carl Edvin*, the son, seems not to have married, at least there is no entry in the Almelund parish records.

Without checking local records and newspapers in the area it is difficult to conjure up how life in the new world affected P.J. and his wife. At any rate they maintained their connections with Sweden. P.J. seems to have remembered his uncle occasionally with a monetary gift. The uncle must not have been as badly off as he suggested since he had children in the vicinity. Perhaps his plea for assistance was one method of keeping up a continued contact? Perhaps Adam might have had close relationship with his nephew in light of the fact that two of Adam's children were given the name of Peter Johan.