

3-1-2016

The Lindblom Letters

Carol Fejfar

Royal F. Peterson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fejfar, Carol and Peterson, Royal F. (2016) "The Lindblom Letters," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 36 : No. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol36/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

The Lindblom Letters. Part 1.

The story of an immigrant family in Iowa

TRANSLATED BY PASTOR ROYAL F PETERSON

SUBMITTED BY CAROL FEJFAR

E-mail: <cfejfar@mchsi.com>

Introduction

In 1881 May 27 the crofter and blacksmith *Carl Victor Lindblom*¹ from Västra Harg in Östergötland left the port of Göteborg with his family² with tickets for Ottawa, IL. Carl Victor was b. 4 March 1835 in Tjärstad (Östg.). His wife was *Johanna Sund* (b. 21 Jan. 1838, also in Tjärstad). Their children were *Gustaf Adolf* (b. 12 Apr. 1867 in Östra Harg [Östg.]); *August Hjalmar* (b. 12 Apr. 1870 in Östra Harg), *Elin Josephina* (b. 7 Jan. 1873 in Vånga [Östg.]), *Otto Leonard* (b. 28 June in Västra Harg [Östg.]), and little *Oscar Leander* (b. 28 Nov. 1878 in Västra Harg).

The three oldest children, *Carl Emil* (b. 4 Sep. 1859 in Sankt Lars, [Östg.]) and *Anders Johan* (b. 10 Nov. 1861 in Rystad [Ostg.]), and *Anna Lovisa* (b. 26 Mar. 1864 in Rystad) remained then in Sweden.

*Anna Lovisa*³ and *Anders Johan*,⁴ a shoemaker, emigrated in 1882 and 1884. Carl Emil stayed in Sweden all his life.

The Lindblom family had tickets for Ottawa, Illinois, which is situated on the road from Chicago to Rock Island-Moline. Ottawa was the destination of some 400 of the Swedish immigrants.

The Lindbloms did not stay long in Ottawa, as tragedy struck soon, and the mother, *Johanna*, died in August, and Carl Victor shortly afterwards moved to Davenport, Iowa, with the youngest children.

Carl Victor had to write his sons in Sweden and tell them that their mother had died, and he wrote to his son *Carl Emil*, called just *Emil*.

Carl Victor's letters have been pre-

served in Sweden and are presently in the care of *Solveig Lindblom Sjölund*.

A few years ago *Carol Lindblom Fejfar* (a descendant of *Oskar Leander*) finally met her Swedish relatives, and she was given copies of the letters, and had them translated. She has graciously permitted them to be published in SAG.

The first letter

August 23rd, 1881

Dearly Beloved children:

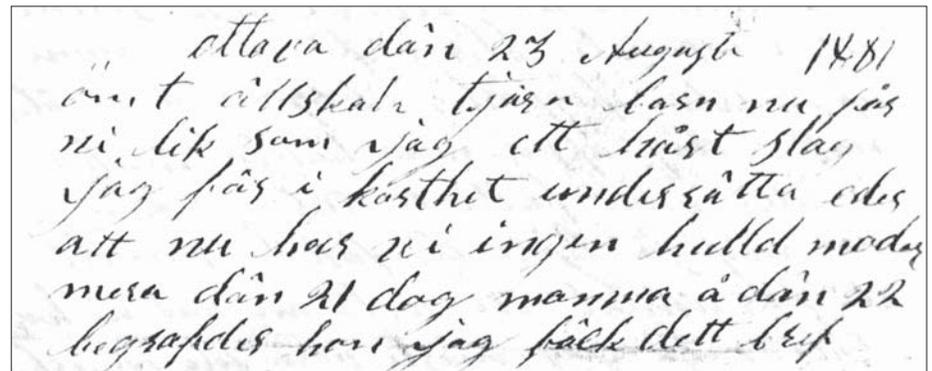
Now you, like me, will get a hard blow. I must shortly inform you that you no longer have your gracious mother. On the 21st mother died and her funeral and burial were held on the 22nd. I received your letter the same day that Mama was buried, yesterday, the 22nd, and I have received both your letters, so both my oldest children are in good health.

[God] has called Mother home to his land, but dear God, what great worries I, a poor man have in this foreign country with all these small children. These will be great worries



Johanna Sund Lindblom (1838-1881).

for you to hear, but think, my dear children, what if we had been at home in Sweden. Then maybe mother would still have been alive and then it would not have been as hard. But now I pray God in heaven that He will strengthen me in my mind, so that I will not lose it by such a ter-



First part of Carl Victor's first letter.

rible sorrow. I am weeping day and night for my lost wife and your poor little siblings, that are so dear to me, the poor ones. They will get to know other things than you ever did.

I must go out to find work, as long as I am able. I begin to sense that I am not so strong as I would like you to believe. And it is not so good to work when one does not understand a word that people are speaking, that is the worst of all.

I will not write much this time, but after about fourteen days I shall write again. Now I haven't any kind of address; but in my next letter I will give you my address, as we are moving from Ottawa to Davenport.

Now I may mention that Mamma had a stately funeral. There were 14 candles and her casket was so grand. I have never before seen such a grand casket. It was said that she should be buried in the Swedish way, but I did not understand a word. The pastor took me in hand and pointed into the grave and then up into the sky, so that I understood that Mother was gone to heaven. All the children came with mother to the grave.

Dear Emil, you must be like a father for your siblings, then we will meet with our dear Mother in heaven. Dear beloved children, I do not have time to write more this time, for I shall write to Auntie⁵ [*faster*] also. Before I end my writing for this time, next time I write I will tell you how our children are doing. Please send this letter to Anna, you might take time off and go to her and meet with her and give her the sad news. You may take your time to go to her. And you may trust that she will appreciate your coming. But it will be a great sorrow for her to know that we are suffering and do not have our Mother anymore.

Goodbye, beloved dear children, for this time. We greet you so very heartily, I and the small children. The Lord God be with both us and your deceased Mother.

God is our help

C. W. Lindblom

Gustaf, Adolf, Hjalmar, Elin, Otto, and Oskar.



C. W. Lindblom (b. 1835).

The second letter

Davenport, Sept. 4th, 1881

Beloved and Dear Children:

That you are in good health is my dearest wish. I must again write a little to you about the circumstances that you do not have a mother any longer, and you know that I am without a wife, without her support and comfort here on this earth, as well as I know this.

You may know, my dear children, when we were at home in Sweden, how we made plans to go so far to a foreign land, that we might meet unfriendly strangers. Therefore I shall name several who by all means would be willing to help you in case of need. There is Adolf. He is in training to become a tailor, and if he may live he will have a good life. And Hjalmar. He is still with a farmer but he is quite well-fixed. Elin and Otto have it quite good where they are. Clara Dahlgren⁶ is near, but I worry about her because she cannot speak on account of the swelling in her throat.

Dahlgren's⁷ children have moved from Ottawa to Davenport, and here I am also. There are eighty English miles from here to Ottawa where your four siblings are. But I go to Oscar every evening and give him a little water(?) or an apple. If I can have some kind of work in the winter,

then I shall take the three small children to be with me; but I do not know how this may work out before winter.

Nevertheless, it seems that there is not much likeness in the matter of finding lodgings or work about which August Dahlgren wrote. Then he tried foolish schemes, deceiving both us and his own sister, encouraging her to come to America. He brings up a perfect plan as it seems. But Clara said he has never written the truth back to his parents nor has she ever known anyone so careless regarding the truth.

So it was that Selma came, but in wintertime, and August had no work for her. I would write, but have not known what to write to Dahlgrens in Adamstorp, about the condition of their children in America.

Uncertain translation: Concerning this I did not need to know of other's failure. So did August [write] to me and my family. So much trouble. So if we had stayed at Bo⁸ I think Mother would still have been alive, as she was so worried when she saw our circumstances, so she had no healthy day anymore in her life, and how long I can strive, God knows, for I have plenty of worries too, and now I am alone with them.

Dear Emil, I do not write to Anna separately, but you can send this letter to her, and I hope these lines will meet with you in good health. Be kind and send little notes to me like both your last letters. I mention that it is not easy to get work in a workshop, when you can't speak a word that they understand, but I have been working for a Swedish man,, but he has promised me winter work, but I have a dollar and a half per day. But I must pay \$3.50 per week for meals, but what I am to pay for the children I don't know yet.

Now I must end my writing for this time. I shall write more soon, but close now with greetings from all of us together. God be with (us all)...

The third letter

Davenport, November 28th, 1881

My Dearly Beloved Children, may you be in good health which is my dearest wish.

I shall try briefly to send a few lines to you and let you know that we have our health, all of us, except for Oscar, he is very weak, but Elin and Otto have been sick, but now they are well. Elin has been given an agreement by a family that until she is married, she is taken as their own. They are a Swedish couple (family). They have no children so she will receive all the inheritance in event of their death. They are rich so now I do not need to have any concerns for her.

But for Otto and Oscar I have to pay two dollars a week each, and that is over seven crowns in Swedish money. I have earned quite well in money since we came to America. But I have had to pay the doctor twenty dollars, and for Mama's funeral twenty-seven dollars. So the money has gone as fast as I have been able to earn it.

All the while I have had a dollar and a half a day, so if Mama had been allowed to live, it would have worked out. Now it is my dearest wish that I should have all of you here together, then I would be satisfied. But we can hope that in time all will be well. It would be very good if Anna comes to us. I believe we can save as much money as is needed to send for you in another year.

In my opinion it will be a very useful thing for you to come here, as you can earn good money here, if only one can learn the language. That goes better for those who are young. Here you can earn around five crowns per day, and if we could live together, then the expenses for food would be less, and I believe it should go well for us.

A shoemaker makes ten dollars a week, and what concerns clothing is very cheap, and food is not so expensive, especially if one can take care of it oneself. Otherwise one must pay a half dollar a day for that.

Recently I have written to Anna

that she should prepare herself for the spring to travel so she can come. I have written to Stockholm that Auntie [*Faster*, father's sister] shall help her with a little money. So I received a letter from Swärd,⁹ in Svängen, in which he promised that he would help her a little. Then we will see whether we can send you tickets for the spring a year away, so you can come to us.

Now my beloved children, you cannot imagine how I grieve for Mama. I never would have thought that it should be so sad, I can never forget her, thus it would be pleasant if I could have my children in one place.

My beloved ones, thank you for sending your portraits. It was good to get them all, but Adolf and Hjalmar have not seen them yet, because we have forty English miles from one to the other. Hjalmar I have not seen since Mama died. So I do not know how it is with him. He is with a farmer and I have only received one letter from him, and then he did not enjoy himself, poor Hjalmar. I grieve much for my children that I cannot have them in my care, but God grant that other (better) days may come. You may believe that they [the little ones] have other days than what you had when you were younger. It must seem to them that both Mama and I were dead. They are not big enough to be away with others, but we must hope that God will bring us together again so we can be together.

The fourth letter

Davenport, December 16th, 1881

My beloved Emil:

I must thank you so much for your letter written on November 14th, which I have received as I should, and in which I find that you had not got the letter that I had written earlier, when I received your picture. But when you wrote that last letter, it had not had time to arrive here as I did not write immediately. But now I hope that you have what I have written to you, and to Anna, and to Auntie, and to Swärd, and to Holm, all near the same time. But if these

letters never reached you, then I must write a few lines. I saw in your letter that you were worried that I had died. But I must thank God that I have good health since I have come to America; the children have been sick but now they are all better.

Now I can tell you that I gave Elin away on the 12th of this month to live with a Swedish family (couple) who have taken her for their own child, on the condition that after their deaths she will receive the inheritance, and they are quite wealthy. I have considered putting Otto and Oscar into a children's home, but I have not found one yet. Now I have to pay four dollars a week, so they are difficult for me to pay for. I do not need to pay for Hjalmar and Adolf. But the sad thing is that we are so far from each other, about eighty-four English miles. Hjalmar is with a farmer, and Adolf is with an elderly couple in Ottawa, but I will see what can be changed if Anna comes to be with me in the spring.

It would be very pleasant if I had all of you here, it is difficult to find work here in the wintertime for the one who does not know a craft, but shoemakers have work both winter and summer. You that are young can learn the spoken language quickly; and then it is not hard to earn good money, only if they know to be careful with it. So I wish that I had you here while you are young, so you could make your future, and in case that you would not wish to live in America, then you could earn enough money so you could travel home to Sweden.

But we will hear how Anna feels about America when she comes here. For my part with my circumstances I cannot like America as I can never have a day of happiness here. In any case I cannot have any happiness unless my children come here. The ones who are little give me more sorrow than joy so far, but it may be that it will be of use for them to come here while they are young.

Now I will not write more this time. I shall write more soon when I can tell you about our Christmas. We

are having a mild winter so far.

Beloved Emil, I will close my writing this time with a thousand heart-felt greetings from all of us, from me, and from your brothers and sisters.

From your loving father, C. W. Lindblom

You may write my address in this manner:

Mr. C. W. Lindblom, 410 East 4th St., Davenport, Iowa, North America.

The fifth letter

Davenport, February 14, 1882

Thanks, beloved Emil, for the letter that you wrote on the 27th of December, which I have received as I should, in which I see that all of you are enjoying good health. You may well believe that it is a big happiness for me to see this, and I thank God for the same good fortune, that all of us have now until this moment of writing.

We are far from each other, but we keep writing to each other, so we may know what comes to pass for each one.

Otto has been with me twice to Oscar, as we live in a town, but Adolf and Hjalmar are in Ottawa, and Elin is not far from me, but I have not visited her since the New Year. I have not received any letter from Anna or Auntie. [line missing] that they are on their way. I am wondering if Anna is busy with preparing herself for her journey. It will be pleasant if all goes well and we get to see one another again. I have no happiness until we are all together again; and I will never forget my beloved wife, that I will never see again. I have to say as it is written in the Psalm, "Away you went, and I could not reward you as I should."

It might well be possible that we can have it much better in time, but it does not go fast for me as long as the children are so little.

Dear Emil, you will see if I can send you the money that I borrowed from you in the summer. It would be so nice, if I may have my health, so I could do that, as whatever happens,

I want you all to come here.

It is hard enough before you have learnt the language, but later it can be much better (for a person) than in Sweden. Here one can save a hundred dollars a year. That becomes much Swedish money. Haven't you received a letter from your brother-in-law, Gustafson,¹⁰ so you know how he likes it in America?

It is possible that a person may not find such a place of work as hoped for upon arrival, but one has to stay there and make some money. It is the best to come in the springtime, as there is plenty of work then, which is not the case during winter. Now there may be thousands of workers who have nothing to do, but in the summer there are jobs. We have had a good winter here all the time, which is very good, as they do not have fires in their bedrooms here, and also they have very bad houses, they do no use boards to build with, so the rooms are very cold.

August and Selma send greetings to you, I visited with them on the 12th. I haven't any more news to write except that I close my writing for this time. May God be with both you and us. Signed by your father, faithful until death.

Your affectionate father,
C. W. Lindblom

Greet all people I know from me. Anna also shall soon receive a short letter. I wonder how she plans to travel. I have my old address:

Mr. C. W. Lindblom, 4-10 East 4th Street, Davenport, Iowa.

The sixth letter

Davenport, March 26th, 1882

Dearly Beloved Children:

That you have your welfare is my daily concern. Your letter, my dear Emil, of the 4th of this month, I got on the 23rd, and in this I find that you are well, thank God, and we have got the same good gift to thank the Lord for. I ask you, Emil, that you send this letter to Anna. I do not write to her now as I am waiting for a letter from her. But I see in your letter that she cannot travel here in the spring,

because she cannot get more money from Auntie. And maybe she could not get some from Swård in Swängen.

I know well enough that when it comes to the point, it may be impossible on account of lacking money. But it is good if she is not without a place. So there is no hurry for her to come, and it is just as well for a girl to come in the fall as in the spring.

For my part I am not in a position now so that I can send any money now until the summer. What I have earned in the winter has not been more than the amount needed to pay for the children, around fifteen crowns in Swedish money each week. When I am writing this letter I have no more than six dollars in my purse. But soon I will get more daily pay so I believe I can send some home. If it is so that Anna does not have a place this spring, then she must go to Auntie's and stay there until I shall send her money. And then she should study English as much as she can, as that is the hardest when one comes here.

If I could speak English, then I could have had it much better, but in the circumstances we found ourselves in when we came here, it isn't any wonder that it has been difficult for me, and I am not yet sure if I will ever have a happy day again.

Beloved Emil, we must wait and see in the mean time what will happen with Anna's travel now, if she could get enough money, then she could come. It was not much that Auntie gave her, that will not be enough.

I thought when I came from Sweden that Clara Dahlgren had it so she could loan me a little money, but they have not been careful, so they do not have any. August does not save any, and there are plenty of alehouses here.

Selma and August are staying with Clara both of them. I can send you greetings from Selma, I pity her because her siblings are so ungodly. They believe there is no God, and they play cards and drink beer all day Sunday.

Now, my beloved son, I must close

my writing for this time. You shall be good and send this letter to Anna, and let us hear how everything comes to be.

Adieu, beloved Emil, Johan, and Anna for this time. God be with both you and us.

Your affectionate father
C. W. Lindblom

Endnotes:

- 1) He was christened Carl Victor (Tjärstad CI:5 [1828-1860] Image 700 / pag 133). As a grown man he is more often called Carl Wilhelm, and in the U.S. he used his initials C.W.
- 2) The family had got their moving-out testimony from Bo, Västra Harg on 29 April (Västra Harg (E) BI:2 [1879-1894] Image 36 / Page 65). With them also travelled Johanna's niece Selma Charlotta Dahlgren from Vreta Kloster (Östg.).
- 3) Anna left from Sya (Östg.) via Göteborg on 1881 May 12 with a ticket for Davenport, IA (*Emihamn*).
- 4) Anders Johan is said to have left Härsnäs in Västra Harg on 24 Oct. 1884 (Västra Harg (E) BI:2 [1879-1894] Image 45 / Page 83), but not found in Emihamn close to that date. He might instead be the Anders J. Lindbom(!), born around 1861 who left 19 March 1884 from Malexander (Östg.) via Göteborg with a ticket for New York (*Emihamn*). Records for 1860–1890 for Malexander were destroyed in a fire.
- 5) Auntie was Carl Victor's sister Augusta Mathilda (b. 24 Sep. 1841 in Tjärstad). She moved to Stockholm, and was there before 1876, when she was living in Hedvig Eleonora parish, and working as a hat seamstress. On 7 July 1879 she married August Heinrich Christofer Lauenstein (b. 19 Aug. 1852 in Hamburg, Germany), a music teacher. Auntie died on 18 Jan. 1883, in Hedvig Eleonora, Stockholm (*Rotemannen* database). She seems to have had some money, as she was supposed to help the children in Sweden with their fares to America.
- 6) Clara Josephina Dahlgren (b. 27 Feb. 1851 in Tjärstad) was the illegitimate daughter of Johanna's sister Maria Sund. Clara as a teenager moved around to various places and worked

as a maid. It is not known when she came to America, but she was in Davenport in the late 1870s. The 1910 U.S. Census, when she lived in Chicago, mentions that she immigrated in 1866, which is possible.

- 7) Three other children of Maria Sund and her husband Daniel Dahlgren also immigrated to the U.S.

Daniel August (b. 3 Aug. 1859 in Rystad) immigrated 3 aug. 1880 from Vreta Kloster (Östg.).

Selma Charlotta (b. 1 July 1864 in Vreta Kloster) came with the Lindbloms in 1881.

Elin Maria (b. 25 Dec. 1868 in Vreta Kloster) left 4 March 1887 from Göteborg with a ticket for Chicago (*Emihamn*).

- 8) Bo in Västra Harg was the place the Lindbloms left when they emigrated.
- 9) Svärd i Svängen is probably the local shopkeeper Anders Johan Andersson Svärd (b. 1846 in Västra Harg) who lived at cottage Svängen on Kulla lands in Västra Harg.
- 10) Not identified.

King Erik – patron saint of Sweden



Erik was a rival king, from 1150, to Sverker the Elder who had ascended the throne c. 1130 and was murdered in 1156, after which Eric was recognized in most or all provinces. According to legends, Eric did much to consolidate Christianity in his realm and spread the faith into Finland. In an effort to conquer and convert the Finns, he allegedly led the First Swedish Crusade against the Finns.

In reaction to Eric's insistence that tithes be paid to support the Church as they were elsewhere in Europe, some Swedish nobles joined forces with Magnus Henriksson, great-great-grandson of the late king Sweyn Estridson of Denmark.

Eric was accosted by the rebel Swedish nobles near Uppsala at Östra Aros as he was leaving church after hearing Mass on Ascension Day in May 1160 or 1161. He was thrown to the ground from his horse, tortured, ridiculed, then beheaded. This

is supposed to have happened on 18 May, which is still the name day for Erik.

The king was buried in the church of Old Uppsala, which he had rebuilt around the burial mounds of his pagan predecessors. In 1167, his body was enshrined and his relics and regalia were transferred to the present cathedral of Uppsala, built on the site of Eric's martyrdom, in 1273. The transfer of Eric's relics extended the depth of his religious following.

In an effort to consolidate his position, Eric's son Knut Eriksson, king of Sweden ca 1172 – 1195, encouraged the veneration of his father as a martyr. Facts and fiction about his life were inseparably mixed together. Later, Swedes believed a miracle occurred at Eric's death: a fountain was said to have sprung from the earth where the king's head fell after being cut off.

(Wikipedia)

In 2014 his reliquary in Uppsala Cathedral was opened, and his remains analysed in many ways, including x-raying the remaining bones and studying if he had osteoporosis. It showed that he had a sturdy skeleton, and a doing a DNA-study is being done to find out if he was related to other old Swedish noblemen.

Most of the results of this research were made public in March 2016. As far as possible it was found that he did die in 1160, and that he had many wounds on his legs and that his upper body was probably protected by a mail shirt, and that he had been beheaded. The DNA results are not yet made public.

