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New country – new name

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The father is named as *Oscar Swanberg* and the mother as *Maria Anderson*. Most disagreeable!

Although it looked very promising, this *Evelina* is probably not the person we are looking for.

Let us try a different angle of attack: the sons, *Fritz* and *Algot*, born in 1882 and 1884, were of the right age to have had to muster for the Great War in 1917 or 1918.

There are 24 million draft registration cards to search, luckily with an excellent index to them. This enormous database is also searchable by birthdates, which is why I put "Fritz and 1882 and October 8th" into the search engine. No matches.

I know however from experience that many immigrants named *Fritz* tended to Americanize their German-sounding name to *Frederick* or *Fred*. When I try this possibility, the following card emerges:

U.S., *World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: *Ancestry.com*

Frederick William Swanberg. Hmmmm, the right birthday but a totally different surname. And do you really add a middle name, *William*, just like that? No, this is probably another dead end ... or? *Swanberg!* Was that not the maiden name of the *Evelina* in the above record? Back to the Chicago census of 1900. Among all the Swedes in Chicago the following family shows up:

The mother is called *Mary Swanberg*, the month and year of birth is correct, and she is a widow. She has given birth to seven children, who are all still living. Five are still at home: *Ceila* (*Cecilia*), *Clara*, *Fred*, and *Albert* (*Algot*). A seventh child, *Char-*

Swanberg, Mary	Head	W-F	July 1851	48	Wid.	77	Sweden
" Ceila	Daughter	W-F	Nov 1873	26	S		Sweden
" Clara	Daughter	W-F	May 1877	23	S		Sweden
" Fred	Son	W-M	Oct 1883	16	S		Sweden
" Albert	Son	W-M	Aug 1884	15	S		Sweden
" Charlie	Son	W-M	Jan 1890	10	S		Illinois

Year: 1900; Census Place: Chicago Ward 10, Cook, Illinois; Roll: 255; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0269; FHL microfilm: 1240255. *Ancestry.com*

lie, was born in Chicago a few years after arrival. The new versions of the first names seem logical. As an immigrant, you are eager to become an American as soon as possible and it is perhaps better to have a non-deviant first name. Thus *Maria* becomes *Mary*, *Cecilia Ceila*, *Edla Edna*, *Fritz Fred*, and *Algot Albert*.

But how can a *Sven Svensson* turn into *Oscar Swanberg*? My theory is that he first tried *Swan Swanson*, but was not satisfied with the repetition, which also may have been difficult for him and others to pronounce.

Better to create a totally new surname similar to *Swanson*; why not *Swanberg*? And the first name then? Well, who was the King of Sweden and Norway at the time? *Oscar II*

Many names for mother

Five of the children can be found in the Illinois death index. On all occasions the father is called *OSCAR Swanberg*, while the mother receives five different names:

Maria Anderson
Mary Nielson
Mary Pikenelly
Mary Pikonell
Mary Piknoll

It is quite obvious that it is the grandmother's original old family name, *Picul-ell*, that lurks in the background when the descendants are to provide the authorities with information for the death certificate. Nice to see, although incorrect!

What happened to Oscar?

So, what happened to poor old *Sven Svensson*, AKA *Oscar Swanberg*? Bad things! As his wife *Mary* is then listed as a widow, he must have died before 1900. Why did he die at such a young age?

Oscar was found in the Illinois, Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916-1947 (database on-line) Provo, UT, USA. *Ancestry.com*.

Name:	Oscar Swanberg
Birth Year:	abt 1850
Age:	48 Yr
Death Date:	11 Jun 1898
Death Place:	Chicago, Cook, Illinois

How did he die?

The *Chicago Tribune* [12 June 1898]:

SLAIN IN A CIGAR SHOP.

Edward Kunz Kills Oscar Swanberg After a Quarrel and Fist Fight.

SHOTGUN THE WEAPON.

Great Hole Torn in the Victim's Breast Causes His Instant Death.

ASSAILANT DEFIES POLICE.

Bars the Door and Refuses Them Admission, but They Break In and Take Him.

NEIGHBORS THREATEN LYNCHING.

Lawndale was the scene of a tragedy last night at the cigar shop at 2044 West Twenty-sixth street, where Edward Kunz, the proprietor, shot and instantly killed Oscar Swanberg and then locked and barricaded the doors and windows of his home and defied the crowd, collected by the shots. There were many threats of lynching. Police from the Lawndale Station, who attempted to enter the place, were warned from the vicinity by the infuriated cigarmaker, who threatened them with the same shotgun that had caused the death of Swanberg. He greeted with mocking laughter all attempts on the part of the officers to pacify him. At 6:30 o'clock Swanberg, who was a carpenter, 48 years old, living at 2935 South Forty-first court, entered the cigar shop and asked the reason of Kunz's visit to his home during the afternoon. Kunz replied that he went to make complaint against Fred Swanberg, who, he alleged, had endeavored to rob him of part of his stock. This so infuriated Swanberg

Continued on next page >

Kunz replied that he went to make complaint against Fred Swanberg, who, he alleged, had endeavored to rob him of part of his stock. This so infuriated Swanberg that he, so Kunz alleges, attempted to grab the cigar man by the throat and chastise him. A little argument pacified Swanberg and the men apparently were again on the best of terms, but in some manner the trouble was renewed, and this time it resulted in a fist fight, Swanberg insisting that Kunz had wronged him and his family.

As Swanberg approached the cigarmaker to grasp him the latter ran to the rear of his shop, and, seizing a loaded shotgun, pointed it at the carpenter, who held up his hands and pleaded piteously for his life. Kunz's anger made him obdurate, and he pulled the trigger, the heavy charge tearing a large hole in the right breast of the carpenter, who sank to the floor dead.

Defies the Police Officers.

Without the loss of a moment's time Kunz securely fastened the doors, and as the report of the shotgun had aroused the neighborhood and the residents were congregating he pulled down the blinds, leaving the body his victim lying where it had fallen close to the door.

Soon a stream of blood found its way over the sill of the door and dripped on the walk. Then the neighbors believed that a murder had been committed and a call was sent for the police. Upon their arrival they ordered the door opened, and receiving no answer Lieutenant Moore gave it a resounding thump with a billet of wood.

Kunz stood on a stool, and as his haggard face appeared at the window he asked what was wanted.

"Open the door," was the command, "we want to see what is in there."

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"You do not need to see, and if you try to come in I will fix you so you cannot see any more than the man who is here now," replied Kunz.

The gathering darkness rendered it imperative that the officers hurry and Policemen Dillon and Bernard, in citizens' clothes, went to the rear of the house and called the cigarmaker, who cautiously answered the summons. The two men engaged his attention while Lieutenant Moore and Sergeant O'Brien raised one of the windows at the side of the shop and, entering softly, crept behind Kunz and in a twinkling had placed him in a position where he could do no harm.

Struggles Like a Wild Beast.

Deprived of his gun and handcuffed, the gray-haired cigarmaker lost all control of himself and gave way to storms of rage. It required the efforts of four policemen to restrain him as he screamed and struggled to be free. It was not until he was safely locked in a cell at the Lawndale Station that his strength left him and he fell on the floor.

The body of Swanberg lay as it had fallen. Near it was the imprint of a bloody hand, evidencing the return of the slayer, who had knelt at the side of his victim, and as he arose had placed his hand on a clean surface of the floor.

An open-faced silver watch, a small amount of money, and a carpenter's rule were all that was found in the pockets of the man who gave up his life in defense of his boy's reputation. The body was taken to the county morgue.

At the police station restoratives were applied to Kunz and after a short period of rest he became rational, but he steadfastly refused to talk of the deed or the motive that actuated him to commit it. After sub-

mitting to considerably questioning he again became apparently deranged and was left alone until 10 o'clock, when he evinced a desire to talk to some of the officers, but would not refer to the subject until some time later, when he said to the reporter of THE TRIBUNE:

"Swanberg's boy is to blame for the trouble. Swanberg came to my shop mad because I told the truth about the boy. When I tried to argue with him he got more angry and tried to strike me. He said he would kill me. I tried to keep away from him, but he followed me and I was afraid for my life. I shot him to protect myself and not allow him to kill me, like he was trying to do."

The prisoner is 51 years old, a native of Switzerland, and has resided in this country about ten years. He owned and operated the little tobacco store and factory in Twenty-sixth street, keeping bachelor apartments in the rear.

Swanberg left a widow and two children.

[Article from Newspapers.com]

Editor's note: There is also a longer article in the Swedish Newspaper *Svenska amerikanaren*, published 14 June 1898 in Chicago.

This article was first published on the *Röster-bloggen*, a blog in Swedish on the web site of the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies (*Sveriges Släktforskarförbund*). After publication one of the readers, Ms. Chris Bingefors, added the information from the database *Homicide in Chicago 1870-1930* (link on page 26) that the murderer, who is here called Edward Hung(!), was sentenced to 12 years in Joliet prison, for intentional manslaughter. The date is given as 11 July, instead of 11 June, but the victim is recorded by surname Swanberg, so this must be the correct case.

Author Ted Rosvall is a well-known Swedish genealogist. His e-mail is <ted.rosvall@telia.com>

Ted Rosvall and co-author Anna-Lena Hultman will in May release their new book (in Swedish) called *Emigrantforska på internet*.

Popular Swedish baby names

The *Statistiska Centralbyrån* (Statistics Sweden) has recently released the list of most popular names for newborn babies:

Girls:

1. Alice 910
2. Lilly 690
3. Maja 664
4. Elsa 643
5. Ella 635
6. Alicia 627
7. Olivia 601
8. Julia 597
9. Ebba 596
10. Wilma 587

Boys:

1. Oskar 879
2. Lucas 864
3. William 850
4. Liam 790
5. Oliver 700
6. Hugo 688
7. Alexander 668
8. Elias 664
9. Charlie 650
10. Noah 627

Most common surnames:

1. Andersson 238 843
2. Johansson 238 259
3. Karlsson 212 126
4. Nilsson 163 029
5. Eriksson 141 745
6. Larsson 119 454
7. Olsson 108 599
8. Persson 102 721