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An Ingevalds-släkten Mystery

What happened to Nils and his family?

BY CARL D. ENGLAND, JR.

My grandfather, Carl Joshua Englund, emigrated from Motala, Östergötlands län, in 1893 at age 14 following the death of his mother in 1892. He arrived in Brooklyn to live with his uncle Isidor Ramstedt. He was accompanied by his next younger brother, David Kaleb, age 13, and followed in turn by his three additional younger brothers: Joseph, Simon, and Johan. Carl Joshua married another Swedish immigrant, Elin Kristina Engström, in 1899, and his brothers all married as well. My grandfather became a skilled machinist. Three of the brothers became Swedish Methodist ministers, following in the footsteps of their father, Carl Johan Englund, who had died in 1893.

As the Englund boys matured, married, and built new lives in America, little knowledge of the family history was transferred to subsequent generations. Those stories that were handed down contained little solid information and much that was fanciful. Perhaps this is not surprising, as the Englund children were orphaned and separated from extended family in their early teens.

What we had been told is that *farfar*, Carl Joshua's grandfather, had been a Swedish soldier and that he had lived near the town of Hjo in Skaraborg län. His father, Carl Johan Englund, had been born in 1832. Englund was not his original name, and he had left the state church to become an early Swedish Methodist minister. With this limited family history, I undertook to discover the story of our family's roots in Sweden and to document them for my children and future generations.

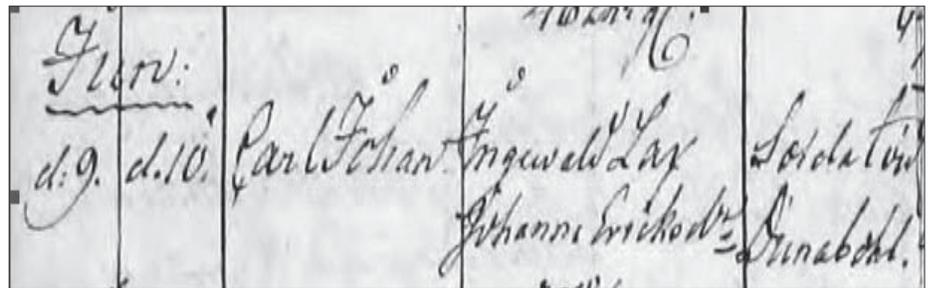
My objective was to learn enough to "put some flesh on those old bones." What I discovered was an amazing tale of apparent family tragedy, individual survival, and ultimate success.

The story that follows is excerpted from

the document that I am writing about our Swedish-American family. It will introduce you to the family mystery that I have to date been unable to solve.

Starting the research

My first step: with help from *SwedGen* genealogist Charlotte Börjesson, we found Carl Johan's birth record in the *Födelse-och dopbok* of Södra Fågelås parish, just south of Hjo in the old county of Skaraborg län. His father was indeed a soldier; his name was Ingevald Lax, and his mother was Johanna Ericsson. Carl Johan was born on June 9, 1832, and baptized on June 10.



Södra Fågelås Volume C:1 (1811-1860) Image 50 Page 91 (Arkiv Digital).

Ingevald's soldier record in the Central Soldiers's Database then provided Carl Johan's father's patronymic name of Nilsson.

The father's name of Ingevald led me to Dalsland and to Olof Ljung's massive multi-volume genealogy of one extended Dalsland family, "*Ingevalds-Släkten*," (Volume I published in 1994) where *SwedGen*'s Anneli Anderson found my ancestor Ingevald Nilsson. I was able to trace our ancestry back to the 1700s and identify Ingevald's parents as Nils Andersson and Carin Svensdotter. However, Ljung's work on this branch of the family ended with a brief note about Ingevald Nilsson: "Ingevald, b. 1795, Lax, soldier for Dunabolet,

Södra Fågelås, Skaraborg län" and a comment that the family: "later probably (moved) to Västergötland."

There was no explanation of how, when, or why Ingevald Nilsson's family might have moved from Dalsland to Västergötland, or where they might have settled. Ljung does record Ingevald's marriage and subsequent family, but fails to record any events between the last record of the family in Dalsland and the record of Ingevald's marriage in Västergötland. I attempted to fill this gap in our family history with my own research.

The Nils Andersson Family

From the Skällered parish *Vigselbok*, I determined that Nils Andersson from Torgrinsbyn and Carin Svensdotter from the farm area Bränna were married in the parish church on October 26, 1783. They established a household at #3 Gärdserud, Holm parish. A son, Johan, was born 15 December 1784, followed by a daughter Anna Stina, on 15 July 1786 and another son, Anders, on 29 August 1788. Son Sven arrived on 12 January 1791 and another daughter, Caisa (Lisa), followed on 2 July 1793. All of these births were recorded in the Holm parish *Födelse-och dopbok*. The Nils Anderson household record in Holm ends with a notation by the minister that

the entire household then moved to Bretorp, probably in 1794. However, there is no Bretorp parish and no record of the family moving to the village of Bröttorp in Holm parish.

The family next appears in the household examination records for 1794-1799 for the village of Västra Edstena in Högsäter parish, where Nils's occupation is listed as a *Mölnare* (modern spelling: *mjöltnare*, miller) and for the first time son Ingevald appears in the family. The record for the Nils Andersson family shows that Ingevald was born in 1795. I have been unable to find a birth record for Ingevald in either the Högsäter or Västra Edstena parish records, or in any nearby parish, and thus we don't know his exact birth date.

In 1798 the family moved briefly to the nearby village of Åkesäter, and then back to Västra Edstena, where they stayed until 1802. Nils was the miller at the Västra Edstena mill on the Valboån River from 1794 until 1802. Another daughter, Britta Maja, was born in 1797 but died in infancy.

Mölnare Nils Andersson	1757.				
K. Karin Svensdotter	1763.				
J. Jan	1784.				
A. Anna Stina	1786.				
A. Agda	1788.				
M. Maria	1791.				
L. Liza	1793.				
I. Ingevald	1795.				

Högsäter Volume AI:8 (1794-1799) Image 77 page 69 (Arkiv Digital).

The parish household examination from 1802 shows the family moving from Västra Edstena back to Mölnerud in Skållerud parish. Mölnerud is adjacent to the village of Torgrinsbyn, which was Nils's family home.

Nils Andersson	1757				
K. Karin Svensdotter	1763				
J. Jan	1784				
A. Anna Stina	1786				
A. Agda	1788				
M. Maria	1791				
L. Liza	1793				
I. Ingevald	1795				

Högsäter Volume AI:9 (1800-1806) Image 103 page 94 (Arkiv Digital).

The family did not stay long in Mölnerud. The 1802 entry in the Skållerud parish household examination record shows that the entire family moved back to Åkesäter, but apparently they never arrived. The pages for Åkesäter in the pe-

riod 1800 to 1806 do not show the Nils Andersson family as living there, and I have found no further trace of them anywhere in Högsäter parish or elsewhere in Dalsland. They seem to have disappeared from Dalsland church records.

Nils Andersson	1757				
K. Karin Svensdotter	1763				
J. Jan	1784				
A. Anna Stina	1786				
A. Agda	1788				
M. Maria	1791				
L. Liza	1793				
I. Ingevald	1795				

Skållerud Volume AI:3 (1789-1802) Image 172 page 167 (Arkiv Digital).

Nils Andersson's background

Nils Andersson was the son of a prosperous farm owner, mill owner, and *nämndeman* (e.g. permanent jurymen) Anders Nilsson, who died in 1790. We know from the *Ingvalds-slåkten* genealogy that his father

written in 1795 that the real estate and mills left in Anders Nilsson's 1790 will were to be divided seven different ways among the sons, daughters, and in-laws, "willingly in agreement to be maintained this way."

This was the year that Ingevald was born and Nils moved to become the parish miller in Västra Edstena. By 1799 Nils's younger half-brother Peter, who had taken ownership of the family farm in Torgrinsbyn after his father's death, was dead at the early age of twenty-eight. His youngest half-brother Anders had died in 1796.

This left Nils as the sole surviving male heir of Anders Nilsson. However, Anders may have had differences with some of his children. Olof Ljung records these terms of Anders's will: "His son Nils received, as a portion, 2 cows, 3 sheep, 1 sheep skin, 1 tub, 2 buckets, 1 barrel, 3 troughs, and 2 basins. His daughter Märta received 2 cows, 3 sheep, 1 new sheep skin, 1 basin, and a cask. The whole of Anders Nilsson's estate amounted to 1,214 *rd.*, while the only expenses listed were the fee for the inventory, and a percentage to be given to the poor. Thus, he really left a rich estate behind." He certainly did not leave a rich estate to Nils.

Nils's father had been married twice. His second wife, Katarina Pettersdotter, lived on until 1814 and under terms of his will retained the farm at Gärdserud. Nils had an older sister, Kerstin, and two younger half-sisters from the second marriage, Anna Stina and Maria, all of whom had married and thus their husbands would control their property interests. A total of seven additional siblings had either died in infancy or before reaching maturity. What appears to have been a successful family had been both decimated and divided and it would not be surprising to find disagreement occurring over time among the surviving sons, daughters, and related in-laws.

(the Big Mill) at Ingridbyn, he owned a couple of millstones worth 50 *rd.*, and 2/3 part of the Mellankvarnen (Middle Mill)."

This source quotes from a document written in 1795 that the real estate and mills

What we will never know is why Nils Andersson felt compelled to leave the family home parish in Dalsland. Perhaps Nils had concluded that it was time to move his family of seven and get a fresh start elsewhere. Olof Ljung, in his Ingevald family genealogy, offers the opinion that the family probably moved to Västergötland, so he as well was unable to find any further trace of the family in Dalsland. We will never know the truth from the sketchy historical records that exist.

Orphan boy Ingevald Nilsson

It appears that something traumatic must have happened to the Nils Andersson family after 1802. I found no trace of Nils Andersson's family arriving in the area near Hjo in Västergötland, where my grandfather's father Carl Johan was born.

Surprisingly, the next trace of Ingevald Nilsson that we found appears in the household examination records for the years 1789 to 1812 for the village of Stora Almö in Norra Fågelås parish, just south of Hjo in Skaraborg län. Karl Bergstrand of Hjo-Tibro *Släktforskarförening* made this obscure discovery for me.

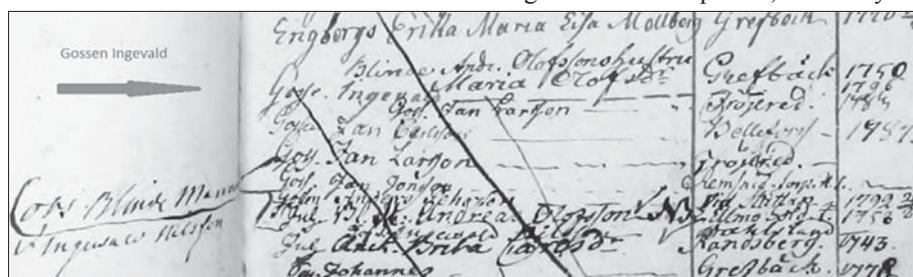
Ingevald is listed as "gossen" in the household of Anders Olofsson and his wife Maria. The term *gossen* means a young boy, not a member of the family, who is not old enough to work.

Somehow this seven-year old boy had found his way from Dalsland, in the west of Sweden, to the county of Skaraborg in Västergötland, in central Sweden along the shore of Lake Vättern near the town of Hjo. On today's roads this would be a trip of about 100 miles. In the early 1800's, before canals or railroads in Sweden, such travel would have been a major undertaking, even for an adult; in those days people rarely moved beyond the next village or parish.

We can only assume that for some reason Nils Andersson chose to leave Dalsland with his entire family, and that something happened along the way to all of the other family members, leaving Ingevald alone as an orphan. There is no record of Ingevald's family "moving in" to the Norra Fågelås parish, nor have I found any record of how or why the people of that parish would take responsibility for a stray orphan from a distant parish.

Anders Olofsson was a blind person; he and his wife Maria made their living by taking in orphans and illegitimate children in return for a fee paid by the parish. The Swedish term for this practice is "*utackorderad*," which was a system in which persons took these children into their home for a period of a year or longer and were paid by the local parish based on a competitive bid. It was like a reverse auction, where the lowest bidder got the contract. We would today refer to this as a foster home.

Here is a section of that page from the Norra Fågelås household examination volume covering the period 1789 to 1812. *Gossen* Ingevald is in the middle of the image, and the note "Ingevald Nilsson" on the lower left.



Norra Fågelås Volume A11:(1789-1812), Image 38/page 65 (Arkiv Digital).

The initial household record for Ingevald is incomplete; he is listed only as Boy Ingevald. The record does not include his family name, gives the parish of his birth as Ör (a parish in Dalsland), and gives his birth date only as 1795. A subsequent annotation on the same page gives his full name, Ingevald Nilsson. All we know for a certainty is that he appeared in Norra Fågelås parish as an orphan sometime after 1802, when he would have been about seven years old, and that he was there prior to 1812.

The next household record for Stora Almö, from the volume covering 1811 to 1824, is more complete. It lists Ingevald first as a boy and then as a farmhand (*dräng*), gives his full name, lists the parish of birth as Öhr in Dalsland (where he was not found), and gives a birth date of 24 June 1798. This new birth date information, probably a creation of his foster family, remained with Ingevald for the rest of his life, making him appear three years younger than his true birth date of 1795 would indicate.

In 1814 Ingevald moved on to the farm at Stora Almöhagen in Norra Fågelås as a farmhand, then in 1815 to Hjellö, and

finally in 1817 to the farm at Björstorp. While he continued to find work as a farmhand, Ingevald's future prospects were limited, with no known family and no property to inherit. In 1819 he was recruited by the local farm owners in nearby Södra Fågelås parish to fill an empty soldier billet in the allotment system, and was enlisted in the Swedish Army.

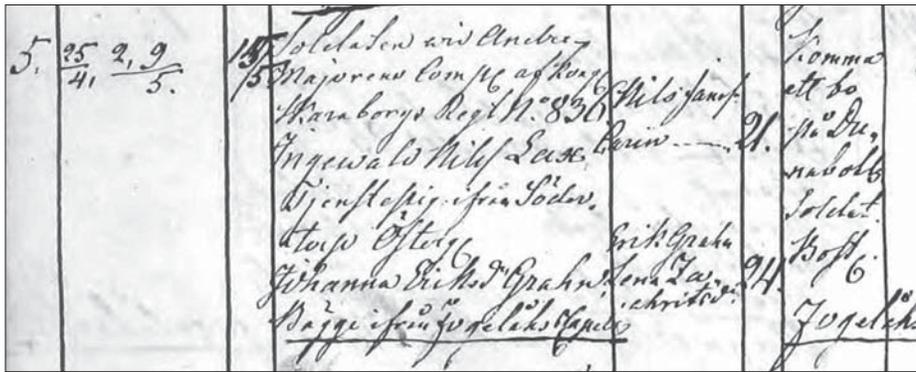
Ingevald Nilsson Lax, Soldier

Ingevald Nilsson was recruited by the Lunnebacka *rote* and enrolled in the Kåkind Company, Skaraborg Regiment of the Swedish Army on March 4, 1819. He was given the soldier name Lax and assigned to Soldattorp #836, located by the

farm at Dunabolet. This was one of twenty such *soldattorp* (soldier cottages) located in Södra Fågelås parish.

With the prospect of establishing a household in the soldier's cottage at Dunabolet, Ingevald would have been looking for a wife. Ingevald's choice was another soldier's daughter, Johanna Ericsson Grahn, born on March 17, 1794, in the village of Stora Björstorp in Norra Fågelås parish, Skaraborg län. She was the daughter of Eric Johansson Grahn, and Helena (Lena) Zachritsdotter Nyberg, and was then working as a *piga* (maid) at the farm Södertorp Östergården. The banns for Ingevald and Johanna were read in the church at Södra Fågelås on April 25, May 2, and May 9, and the couple was married there on May 15, 1819.

Note that in the *Vigselbok* record (next page), Ingevald seems to have been unable to provide the minister with his parent's true patronymic family names. His father's name is given as Nils Nilsson, not Nils Anderson, and his mother's as Carin ..., not as Carin Svensdotter. There are no family members listed as witnesses.



Norra Fågelås Volume B:2 (1785-1825) Image 162/Page 327 (Arkiv Digital).

Ingevald and Johanna raised a family of seven surviving children, five girls and two boys.

My grandfather's father, Carl Johan, was the youngest of those children. When Carl Johan was fifteen, in 1847, he left the *soldattorp* at Dunabolet and found employment as an apprentice butler at nearby Hjellö Säteri (Hjellö Manor). He assumed the surname Englund and subsequently went on to lead a fascinating and colorful life, the subject of many family legends.

At age 36 Carl Johan became interested in the Methodist religion. He subsequently attended the seminary at Lund University, formally resigned from the Lutheran Church in 1874, married, and began his true life's work as a missionary Methodist preacher. Carl Johan Englund died on 22 May 1893 in Motala, Östergötland län. From his church obituary: "Brother Englund was a zealous and faithful preacher

and in certain ways an original personality."

Ingevald Lax was retired from the army in 1855 and died in 1868. The story of his family and how he became an orphan appears to have died with him and not been passed down for posterity. Thus we are left today with this *Ingevalds-slåkten* mystery: what happened to Ingevald Nilsson's family? I continue to search for the answer.



Hjellö Manor.



Carl Johan Englund, Methodist preacher (1837-1893).

Many thanks

The following are among the many genealogists in Sweden who have so greatly assisted me in discovering my family roots in Sweden.

- From *SwedGen*:
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- From *Hjo-Tibro Släktforskarförening*:
Karl Bergstrand.

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These statistics are compiled from the Social Security Death Master File. There is a link on p. 26 that explains more about this map.