

9-1-2018

News from the Swenson Center: Summer intern Shelby tells about her work

Shelby Jensen

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



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

Recommended Citation

Jensen, Shelby (2018) "News from the Swenson Center: Summer intern Shelby tells about her work," *Swedish American Genealogist*. Vol. 38: No. 3, Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol38/iss3/5>

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.

News from the Swenson Center

Summer intern Shelby tells about her work at the Swenson Center

Hej!

My name is Shelby Jensen. I am a Scandinavian Studies major here at Augustana, with a focus on the Swedish language, and I am just beginning my senior year. I am currently a student worker for the fall term in the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, a position which I happily accepted after a summer internship at the center. I first learned about the center and their work with genealogy and archival preservation through a class I had taken with one of the Scandinavian Studies professors, Mark Safstrom, who had emphasized the importance of the center. During this visit I came to realize that interning at the center would be an excellent opportunity for me to learn more about Swedish history in a more direct and personal manner. As a Scandinavian Studies major I found this very appealing.

Before attending Augustana I graduated early from Moline Senior High School, and decided to attend a technical college for dental assisting. While I found the work easy and liked helping the patients, it was not long before I realized that it was not the career choice for me.

After this, I attended Black Hawk College where I received my Associates Degree with a major in Art and a minor in English. Since I have always had a love for foreign language I have previously taken German, Spanish, and French. Learning these languages was fun, but the language I have always been most interested in is Swedish.

I am very lucky to finally have the opportunity to learn Swedish at Augustana, and my first year of learning Swedish only strengthened my love for it. My second year in Swedish is off to a great start, and we are focusing our efforts solely on translating. So far I have been able to take very fun courses in Scandinavian Studies including Swedish Immigration, Old Norse Sagas, and a religion course that dealt with the changes brought on in Scandinavia by the reformation.

Currently, besides the language class, I am taking “Vikings to Volvo’s” where we are learning about the history of the Nordic region from the viking age until modern times. I am also in “Folklore and Fairytales”, which covers the oral traditions that make up folklore from Scandinavia. These oral traditions include poetry, legends, and fairy tales, among other things. This class has been insightful into just how complex folklore is, and how much it changes and reflects the culture itself depending on who is talking. During my time as an intern, and now a student worker, I have gained invaluable experience in the archival field, as well as a new found respect for it. One of my regular duties includes processing or re-processing archival collections and transferring the information that I gather onto a finding aid to be posted online. These finding aids help those who are doing research to determine whether or not a specific collection will be useful to them. Going through these collections has been an interesting experience, especially when coming across old photographs. The Jenny Lind Chapel photographs are my favorite so far.

When taking a Swedish Immigration class last year we went on a small excursion to Bishop Hill and Andover, where our class got to tour and learn about the Jenny Lind Chapel. While seeing the beauty of the chapel in person had been fun, I also thought it was neat to see the chapel in photographs from a few decades ago, and see just how much it has changed with time. Much of the work I have done with photographs includes scanning them and adding them online into a catalog called *PastPerfect* where they can be viewed and commented on by others.

Accompanying these tasks are regular office duties such as filing, copying, and running the occasional errand. One aspect of my job that I have found to be the most rewarding is book preservation. Many of the books in the stacks and in the collections I process or re-process are fairly

aged, meaning that it isn’t uncommon for there to be loose pages, and sometimes, even the covers have been separated. In both of these cases there are methods to fix these problems, and the books are able to be saved. During my time as an intern I was also assigned a project to build an exhibit to be put on display for visitors to the center. For this project I had free reign of the topic, and decided to combine my love for Swedish culture with my love for Art. My topic was ‘Swedish Arts in North America’, and it covers a range of subjects such as painting, sculpting, writing, music, and etc. This project gave me the chance to search through some of the collections that interest me most, and I learned a great deal about Swedish-American artists and some of the struggles they went through as they adjusted to a new culture in North America.

Next year in the fall my plan is to finally study abroad in Jonköping, Sweden, at Södra Vätterbygdens *Folkhögskola*. This trip will be for around 15 weeks, and will be a completely new experience for me. I have traveled within North America before, but I have never had the opportunity to leave the country prior to this. I am excited to experience the culture first hand that I have been studying, and I hope to explore as much of Sweden as I can when I have the free time. To my knowledge we will also be going on a trip to Rome, and on another trip to Copenhagen which only triples the excitement! then, I will continue to study and learn all that I can.

Hej då!

