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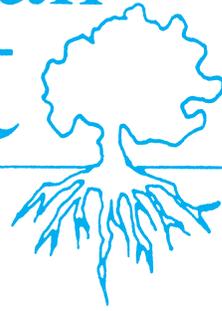
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# Swedish American Genealogist

*A journal devoted to Swedish American  
biography, genealogy, and personal history*



# Swedish American Genealogist



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*Swedish American Genealogist*

## **Publisher:**

Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center  
Augustana College, Rock Island, IL 61201-2296  
Telephone: 309-794-7204. Fax: 309-794-7443  
E-mail: [sag@augustana.edu](mailto:sag@augustana.edu)  
Web address: <http://www.augustana.edu/swenson/>

## **Editor:** Elisabeth Thorsell

Hästskovägen 45, 177 39 Järfälla, Sweden  
E-mail: [sag@etgenealogy.se](mailto:sag@etgenealogy.se)

## **Editorial Committee:**

H. Arnold Barton, Tyresö, Sweden  
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## **Cover picture:**

*The story of the Swedish-American Noak Olsson is told on page 16. (Photo by Elisabeth Thorsell)*

# The “America Journey” of Tilda and Emma

TEXT AND PICTURES BY DORINDA D. LUNDIN

One of the most exciting moments in family-history research is that instant when all the details of an ancestor’s “America Journey” come together and the story is made whole. For some, the story comes easily; for others the research is more intense and then, there are those stories that defy retelling. For years, Matilda Charlotta Larson kept her story hidden.

Matilda, born Tilda, was my husband’s maternal grandmother. In an effort to create a family-history website, I agreed to help him research and record both of his grandparents’ immigration stories. They had been strangers in America, Tilda from Öland and Lars from Dalsland, but these two Swedish immigrants would eventually meet, marry, raise a family, and live out their American dreams in a coal mining town called Grassflat.

While each story would begin long ago in Sweden, it was important that each grandparent had his or her own voice and told his or her own story. We hoped that through the research we would uncover the details of what their lives had been like in Sweden and why they chose to leave and come to America. We hoped to understand what it had been like to journey to America as a young immigrant and why each chose to locate in the coal-mining region of central Pennsylvania.

The task presented many research challenges, but none more frustrating than my efforts to detail Tilda’s voyage to America. While we were fortunate to have access to family

journals, letters, and photo albums,<sup>1</sup> it was quickly apparent the essential information needed to complete the story of Tilda’s “America Journey” had been lost to the ravages of time.

## Tilda in Sweden

On August 5, 1871, a fourth daughter, Tilda Charlotta, was born to Lars Peter Nilsson and his wife Stina Kajsa Knutsdotter at Lundeby #2 in Persnäs, Kalmar län, on the island of Öland. Lars Peter, originally from Södra Greda in Föra,<sup>2</sup> married Stina in 1858 and moved to her home parish of Persnäs. They established themselves on a farm at Södravik where the first four children were born: Carolina Sofia (1859), Brita Marie (1862), Nils August (1865), and Kristina Emeli (1867). Tilda Charlotta (1871) and Johan Peter (1874) were born after the family moved to Lundeby #2, a small farm that Lars Peter owned.<sup>3</sup>

During the mid to late 1800’s much of Sweden endured years of crop failure, over-population, and economic depression. Persnäs, like other rural regions throughout Sweden, suffered acutely from the poverty these times created. Economic recovery was complicated by an established agrarian way of life that required labor-intensive practices, but of Lars Peter’s six children only one, Nils August, was old enough to help till his 7/18<sup>th</sup> mantal of farmland.<sup>4</sup> While I can find no record confirming this story, family history recounts that Lars Peter would occasionally “go to sea” to supplement the family



*Tilda (Matilda) Charlotta Larson shortly after arrival in America.*

income. While unconfirmed, it is a plausible tale. Some of Lars Peter’s ancestors had made their livelihood on the sea and on an island such as Öland, even the families of sailors found it necessary to farm the land for sustenance.<sup>5</sup>

In 1880 Lars Peter died from consumption.<sup>6</sup> He was only 48 years old. Lars Peter left a family of six children, the youngest only 6 years old, a wife whose health was beginning to fail, and serious debt. According to the estate inventory, his assets were 3,135 kronor and his debts 3,517 kronor.<sup>7</sup> Life had dealt harshly with Lars Peter.

After settling the estate, the household examination records in-

dicade that Stina continued to live gratis on her husband's land, but one by one her children left to make their own lives. Between 1878 and 1882 three daughters left to work on area farms and by 1889 both sons had immigrated to America. One son, Nils August, appears to have left Sweden without obtaining the necessary permission although his name continued to be listed as a household member. Only Tilda remained in Sweden to provide and care for her widowed mother.

Tilda had become a talented dressmaker and now she used this trade to support her mother. To find work, she traveled about the region staying with her patrons while she sewed for their families. Even with this income there was never enough money to cover the expenses of her mother's home. Wanting to remain independent and keep Stina safe, Tilda moved her mother to a nearby cellar house described in family journals as a *kellarstuga*.<sup>8</sup> When these accommodations proved too expensive to maintain, a small cottage was obtained behind the village schoolhouse. From time to time after Lars Peter's death, usually between jobs, marriages, or emigration, family members moved back and forth through the family home, but none stayed long enough to relieve Tilda of the physical or financial burden. While it appears in 1894 that Tilda's older brother, Nils August, is still at home, a note in the entry indicates, "... he visits in America."<sup>9</sup>

Family records indicate that by the



The "kellarstuga" in Persnäs.

mid 1890's Stina's health had worsened to the point where she could no longer be left alone. Now unable to work away from the home, Tilda realized that something must change. It was agreed that Stina would go to Löt and live with her married daughter Kristina Emili, and Tilda would journey to America.<sup>10, 11</sup> Daughter Tilda emigrated in 1895 Aug. 31 from Persnäs.

### Tilda is missing

Between 1895 and 1900 all traces of Tilda disappear. She does not reappear in any records until 1900 when she marries Lars Magnus Larson in Peale, PA. A check of American census records uncover two possible dates for Tilda's emigration from Sweden, 1895 and 1897,<sup>12</sup> but, as shown above, she did leave in 1895, though she has not been found in the Swedish databases Emihamn, Emibas, or Emiweb. Searches for her arrival in East Coast ports also prove futile. Every effort is made to find records for Tilda, including the use of alternative spellings, parallel family searches, and pure guesses, but each ends with a dead end.

Today, I rely on the digital resources available to the amateur researcher, but I began researching family history long before many of these tools existed. In today's media-saturated age it is important to remember that many non-digital resources remain available to the amateur family historian. The Internet and document subscription services provide swift and convenient access to primary sources once unavailable to the non-professional genealogist, but they do have limitations. As my frustrations with Tilda's missing information grew, a soft voice from the past reminded me not to forget the basic rules of research. I must slow down and carefully review all of my prior work, information, and sources.

The tactic proved beneficial. I had forgotten about a story told to me early in my research. Tilda had not traveled to America alone. According to family documents, Tilda had worked with an assistant seamstress



Emma Carolina Jonsson, a.k.a. Emma C. Peterson.

who was named Emma. When Emma heard that Tilda was leaving for America, she pleaded with her friend and co-worker to go along. Her protestations were successful for she appears in photo albums with her American family and a note that "Aunt" Emma Peterson was not a real aunt.

If I could find Emma's immigration details then perhaps I could find Tilda's, but while there was some information about her American life, no details survived about the Swedish Emma.

### The Swedish-American church Records

While visiting the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center located at Augustana College, I had included time to review their collection of Swedish-American church records. I knew that Tilda and her husband Lars had been married in the Nebo Lutheran Church in Peale, PA, and included that parish in my research with the intent of copying the records that pertained to the family and study them later. The records were sparse and difficult to read. One page was so badly damaged it had to be copied in a negative format to insure

its readability.

Though I had used these records several times since they were copied, I had never discovered additional new information. Even so, I was determined to look at everything carefully one more time. When I scanned the documents this time with an eye for different information I was amazed to read the last two entries on the negatively copied document. There, hiding in plain sight, were my two young women: Matilda C. Larson, now using her American name, and her friend, Emma C. Carlson. The entries revealed identical immigration dates and destinations (1895 to Antrim, PA), identical church transfers (1897 to Nebo Lutheran in Peale), and personal information about Emma including her birth date of 1873 and her last residence in Sweden, the Kalmar village of Löt, a parish just south of Persnäs.<sup>13</sup>

## Back to Swedish records

Armed with this information, I next returned to the household examination records for Löt parish in Kalmar. A search for a female born in 1873 with a father named Carl soon gave

me Emma's Swedish records. Emma Carolina Carlson had been born on October 14, 1873, in Högsby, Löt, Kalmar län. She was the daughter of Carl Peter Jönsson and Kajsa Stina Olsdotter. When she left Löt for America on August 31, 1895, Emma was listed as living at No. 2 Öfra Wannborga Utmark with her widowed mother and brother Gustaf Victor.<sup>14</sup> Emma was found in Emibas as Emma Carolina Jonsson, but not in Emihamn.

It is important to note that emigration from Öland did not always follow the traditional routes of other Swedish regions. Before a bridge was constructed, the island was isolated and dependent upon ferries and ships for transportation. Emigrants from Öland could either leave by traveling north to Stockholm or south towards Europe and the southern Swedish cities. Tilda and Emma could have come to America by way of a European port.

I returned to Ancestry to re-search East Coast arrivals but this time omitted any suggestion of departure port. Finally, success! Within an hour, I had my travelers in New York City on September 28, 1895.<sup>15</sup>

Tilda and Emma had left their villages and traveled to Helsingborg



*Tilda and her husband Lars Magnus Larsson.*

on Sweden's west coast. Though not a major embarkation port for America, Helsingborg was a port of call for the German-owned Hamburg-American Line. An interesting note according to Ancestry is that Helsingborg's emigration data was not listed on *Emihamn* until 1929 complicating my efforts to find the women.<sup>16</sup>

According to the ship's "Customs List of Passengers," the two travelers boarded the immigrant ship *Venetia* in Helsingborg. It steamed to Göteborg for more passengers, then to Kristiansand in Norway for its remaining complement of 680 emigrants, cargo, and cabin passengers. From Norway the *Venetia* traveled west directly to New York, discharging its passengers at the Hamburg-American Line docks in Hoboken, NJ.<sup>17</sup> Once cleared through customs, the two women most probably boarded an immigrant train in Hoboken for transport to the coal fields of Antrim, PA, the home of Tilda's brother Nils August.

Once the two women arrived in Antrim, contrary to family stories, Emma may not have left Tilda for work in Jamestown, NY. It is more likely that both young women were drawn to that vibrant city<sup>18</sup> for periodic employment and a Swedish social life. There was even a suggestion that Tilda may have met her husband-to-be in Jamestown, but all that is known for sure is that Antrim remained both Tilda and Emma's home parish until 1897.



*Persnäs church on the island of Öland.*

In 1897, with coal production waning in the Antrim mines, the mine owner, Clearfield Bituminous Coal Company, encouraged its Tioga County miners to move south to their newest mines and a utopian planned community called Peale. Emma, Tilda, and other family members picked up and moved on once again, this time to the Peale-Grassflat mines.<sup>19</sup>

## One Final Note

In wanting to know how Tilda and Emma might have traveled from Öland to Helsingborg, I investigated the railroad history of Sweden. While ferries could still have transported them in 1895, the railroads were now fairly well developed including narrow-gauge secondary routes that connected trunk rail lines to port cities.

After consulting an 1890's Swedish railroad map,<sup>20</sup> I realized that the easiest and fastest route for our travelers would have been by rail south from Kalmar, then west across southern Sweden to the coast on a rail line connecting to both Malmö and Helsingborg.

In 2002 my cousin and I visited my relatives in Skåne. As a way of helping us understand what Sweden was like during my grandmother's time, the same period as Tilda and Emma's, we were treated to a day excursion aboard a historically preserved narrow gauge railroad. With its period-attired conductor, preserved carriages, and steam locomotive, the train traveled a route across southern Sweden first towards the Baltic, then on its return towards the west coast. It is possible that a little over a hundred years before, on just such a train, perhaps along that very rail bed, two young women sat and talked excitedly about the adventures before them. That adventure was their "America Journey," a journey to the rest of their lives.

## Endnotes

- 1) The family of Tilda's daughter, Edith, retains a private collection of family journals, letters, and scrapbooks.
- 2) *Husförhörslängd Föra* (Kalmar) (1851-1860 p. 26) Genline AB.
- 3) *Husförhörslängd Persnäs* (Kalmar) (1861-1870 p. 203), (1871-1880 p. 171), (1881-1885 p. 163), (1886-1894 p. 178), Genline AB.
- 4) *Husförhörslängd Persnäs* (Kalmar) (1871-1880 p. 171) Genline AB.
- 5) Anderson, Larry Alan, *My Wallander Swedish Family*, Vol I and II, 2006, Privately published, Crosby, Texas. (This volume is a comprehensive genealogy which includes Lars Peter Nilsson's ancestors on Öland and was developed in conjunction with Swedish genealogists. Mr. Anderson's relatives are connected to Tilda through her sister Kristina Emili.)
- 6) (Persnäs F:1) (provided by SAG editor).
- 7) Vadstena archives, Ölands Norra Mot, volume Fll: 77, page 1023 (provided by SAG editor).
- 8) *Kellarstuga* is most likely a coined term used by the family. "Källare" is a Swedish word that means basement, cellar; older spelling could be "kellare."
- 9) When merging family documents and parish records conflicting information often emerged. The 1910 U.S. Census gave 1886 as the immigration date for Tilda's brother Nils August. Parish records continue to show him as part of his Swedish household in the 1886-1894 household examination and a note that "he visits in America." There is no record of his leaving Sweden. Nils August may or may not have had official permission to leave the country. U.S. Census, Cooper Township, Clearfield, PA, 1910, Ancestry.com, *Husförhörslängd Persnäs* (Kalmar) 1886-1894, Genline AB.
- 10) Family journal entry by Edith Matilda Larson Lundin about her mother.
- 11) SAG Editor's note: Stina Kajsa died in 1896 Aug 1. She is recorded as living in Persnäs village, but there is a note that she actually died in Arbelunda in the nearby parish of Löt and is buried there. She was living with daughter Christina Emilia and husband, Lars Johansson Lundqvist in his 2nd marriage. He was, born 1822 Apr. 5 in Arbelunda, Löt, and died 1900 June 19 in Arbelunda, Löt. [Löt AIIa:1, p. 7 (1898-1915). Löt C:3:9].
- 12) U.S. Census for Cooper Township, Clearfield County, PA, 1900, 1910, Ancestry.com.
- 13) Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Rock Island, Ill., The Swedish-American Church Records Collection, Nebo Lutheran Parish Register, Peale, PA.
- 14) *Husförhörslängd, Löt* (Kalmar) 1871-1885, p. 218, 1886-1897, p. 357, Genline AB.
- 15) New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957, "Venetia, September 28, 1895," Ancestry.com.
- 16) About Swedish Emigration Records, 1783-1951, *Emihamn*, Helsingborg 1929-1950, Ancestry.com.
- 17) Blanck, Maggie, "The Steamship Companies and Railroads in Hoboken," <http://maggieblanck.com/Hoboken/Hoboken.html>
- 18) Ebersole, Helen G. "The New City: What Jamestown was like in 1886," *Jamestown (NY) Post-Journal*, 29 March 1986. Tempo, <http://prendergastlibrary.org/jamestown;1886,htm>
- 19) Feldmeier, Jeffrey L., "An Overview of the Underground Coal-Mining Era at Grassflat and Environs," <http://grassflat.bravehost.com/mining.html>
- 20) Rail map of Sweden (1901), History of rail transport in Sweden, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history\\_of\\_rail\\_transport\\_in\\_Sweden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_of_rail_transport_in_Sweden)

Address for the Lundin family website:  
[http://web.me.com/lundind/The\\_Larsons\\_of\\_Grassflat\\_II/Welcome.html](http://web.me.com/lundind/The_Larsons_of_Grassflat_II/Welcome.html) (user name: *grassflat*, password: *matilda*).

### The author:

Dorinda D. Lundin, 5 Smith Road, Woodstock, CT 06281  
 Her e-mail is  
 <elundin3460@charter.net>

# Those mysterious words – what do they mean? Part 4.

## Husaga

means “household punishment,” which means that the master of the household had the right to “correct” his servants if they had done anything wrong.

The wife and children were also subordinated to the master. He could just box the culprit’s ears or bring out the cane.

This right was mentioned in some of the medieval laws. The 1734 law only mentioned this in connection with servants. In 1858 the law was changed and only applied to hired boys under the age of 18 and hired girls under 16. It was totally abolished in 1920.



Husaga. Sketch by Fritz von Dardel, 1850s.

## Legostadga

In the old days you had to have steady work, otherwise you were considered a burden on your parish. If you did not have a master, you were in danger of being apprehended by the authorities as you lacked *laga försvar* (see SAG 2009/2, p.8).

The relationship between master and servant was regulated in a law, *Legostadgan* (Law on employment) which was decreed in 1664, and was

replaced and modernised several times before it was abolished in 1926.

It stated that this law should be read in church twice a year. From 1856 it was forbidden to read publications in the church that had to do with emigration or recruitment from abroad of Swedish servants. This was probably because the government was apprehensive that emigration would cause a lack of servants needed in Sweden.

In this law it was stated that the servant (*tjänstehjon*) should be obedient, sober, God-fearing, and do all his or her duties in an orderly fashion. If the servant did not obey orders or was insubordinate, then the master had the right to apply “*husaga*.” If a maid, for instance, broke some household vessels, then she had to pay for replacement. Or if a *dräng* answered his master back in uncivil words he could lose his job and all the salary for that year.

If a servant ran away from his job, the bailiff could be asked to bring him/her back, and he/she had to stay until the year was up, and also lose half his/her wages. It was also a felony to try to entice a servant from his/her present master. These matters usually ended up in the local court, and the perpetrator was fined.

## When were servants hired?

According to the 1734 law it was only allowed to recruit new servants in the time between *Larsmäss* (Aug. 10) and *Mickelsmäss* (Sep. 29). The new master then paid a part of the salary (*städja* or *städjepenning*) and the servant had to show testimony from his/her former master (*orlofssedel*), that gave that person’s opinion on the servant’s conduct. The servant also should hand in their notice during

*Olofsmäss* (Jul.18) and *Larsmäss* (Aug. 10), if they wanted to leave their job.

During the 1800s servants had to move to their new post on Oct. 24 (in Stockholm also April 24). Often they were free the week after, which was the only vacation they had during the year. This was called *slankveckan*, which means that they had to pay for their own food during this week, as they had not officially started their new job.

## An example of a maid’s wages in 1817

In February 1817 there was a court meeting in Filipstad, and Mrs. Eva Helena Brattström complained to the court that her husband Nils Wessman had incurred a lot of debts, and she wanted no share of them, as she had inherited a good-sized property from her late husband mining farmer (*bergsman*) Anders Swensson.

As a widow she was in charge of her property, but when she remarried, her new husband became her guardian, and he did some unwise business deals, so she wanted a division of her chattel and monies.

During this case one of her maids, Lisa Nilsson, complained that she had not received what she had been promised in wages. She listed the following items:

Cash	5 daler
1 fine woolen dress	
3 ells of linen (1 ell = 45”)	
9 ells of coarse linen	
3 pairs of Swedish shoes	
(with birch bark bottoms)	
1 pair of German shoes	
(with leather bottoms)	
3 pounds of wool	
1 everyday dress	
1 everyday apron	
1 knitted hat	

# Your link to your history!



## NEW!

The complete 1880 Swedish Census is available on a CD. Millions of Swedes before the Great Emigration in the 1880s!



## The Digital Research Room

Here you can do research about people and their property, their life, work and taxes.

Contact us at the address below to find out much more!



## Soldiers

We have soldiers! Find them in the Muster Rolls from the 1680s to the 1880s for all the allotment soldiers.



## Tax records

The Tax records (*mantalslängder*) are here.

From the 1640s to 1842!

One of the released prisoners in the SVAR prison records.



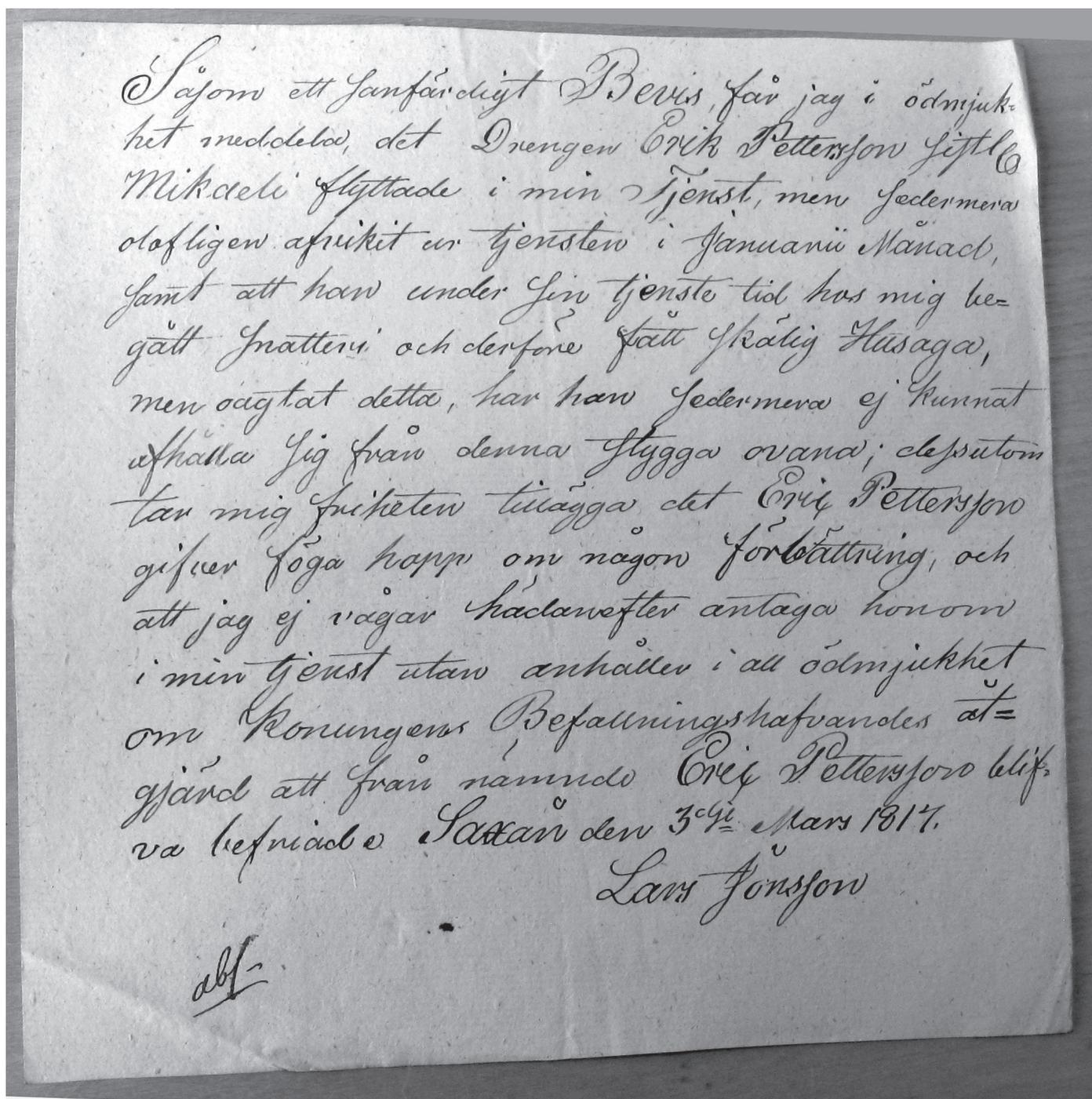
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# Handwriting Example XXV



This document was found in the "loose papers" (*inneliggande handlingar*) from 1818 in the archives of Färnebo häradsrätt (legal district court). The archive is kept in the Värmlandsarkiv in Karlstad.

These "loose papers" are a collection of documents sent in by officials and the public before each court

meeting, and have some connection to the cases that are to be heard.

These documents are usually not filmed and can only be searched during a visit to the archive.

They can contain many interesting matters, like a copy of a will, a letter from someone to a brother in law who had borrowed money and not paid it

back, an apprentice's contract, or a list of people who had died since the last court meeting. During the early 1900s they can also contain affidavits from America, in connection with a death of a parent, giving addresses of heirs in the U.S.

A little used, but valuable source!  
*Solution on p. 24.*

# Torp and Torpare - An Analysis

## Confusing words for many researchers

BY NILS WILLIAM OLSSON (†)

Anyone using Swedish parish records for the purpose of researching his or her family will at one time or another come upon the words *torp* and *torpare*. These terms are ubiquitous in all Swedish genealogical literature and have from time to time caused minor headaches for students unfamiliar with the Swedish language or the history of the Swedish social system. How should the words be translated? There are of course standard translations and by consulting dictionaries we find that *torp* is usually translated as croft or cottage and the resident of a *torp* thus becomes a *torpare*, much as the resident of a croft or cottage becomes a crofter. It seems simple enough. But we are here dealing with words that go far back into Swedish history, words

which across the span of years have changed meaning. It is not an easy task to unravel the history of the word *torp*. In Swedish dictionaries a *torp* is usually given as “a small farm, usually on encumbered land,” meaning land which does not belong to the resident of the *torp*. English dictionaries equate a croft with “a small field or pasture near a house” or “a small farm, especially a tenant farm.” This explanation should suffice for the average student who merely wishes to translate into English the rough equivalents of the words *torp* and *torpare*.

But there are those students of genealogy who wish to plow deeper into the etymology of the Swedish word, to dissect, if possible, the word itself, in order to better understand

its role as a part of the Swedish social fabric.

### The history of the word

Without wishing to appear magisterial, let me go back into Swedish history to see where the term began. It is of course cognate of the German word *dorf*, which signifies a village or small town.

In Swedish the term has become much more restrictive, and its origin began as the word for a single farm located on the outskirts of a village, usually on the village common. In Old English the word for a small hamlet was called a *thorp*, now obsolete, except as it has remained a part of place names, as well as surnames.

We recognize names like Jim Thorpe, the famous American Indian athlete in the Stockholm Olympics 1912. We see it in the name of James Edward Oglethorpe, the British philanthropist and army officer (1697-1785), who settled in what was to become our state of Georgia in 1733. Lately the word has surfaced in the name of Robert Mapplethorpe, whose photographs have been widely discussed in the nation's news media.

In Denmark the form became *t(e)rup* or *-rup* as in the placename of Kastrup, the international airport in Copenhagen. But back to Sweden. As time went on the isolated farm on the outskirts of the more settled areas called a *torp* attracted the

This is the  
2nd issue of the  
**30<sup>th</sup>**  
volume, and this is  
one of the  
old gems



A torp in Flistad parish, Östergötland. Ca 1900.

settlers and the place name was transferred to the community or the parish and even the town.

Thus in historical terms, the word was equated with a farm without any pejorative connotation. This was then the original use of the word. In Skåne the word became a part of a number of castles, parishes, and towns, as in the castles Knutstorp, Björnstorp, Vrams Gunnarstorp, and Krapperup, the latter with the Danish suffix -rup and in parishes like Klagstorp, Tullstorp, and Gudmuntorp, and in cities like Åstorp, Staffanstorp, and Teckomatorp.

There are three parishes in Sweden named Torp and no less than six are named Torpa. The *torp* which thus in Skåne as well as in Denmark was located on the outskirts of the village was therefore equal in social acceptance to the farms in the village.

Only the Skåne, and the Västgöta provincial laws recognized this fact. Other provincial laws in Sweden saw it differently. Hence the small farms located on the periphery of the village in other parts of Sweden were also called *torp*, but had a sociologically inferior position vis-à-vis the farms in the village.

It is this latter concept which has won wider acceptance, even in Skåne, and Västergötland, where so long as the *torp* had the superior meaning, the smaller and more insignificant farms were called *tomter* in Västergötland, *gatehus* in Skåne and *målar* in Blekinge.

## The importance of the *torp*

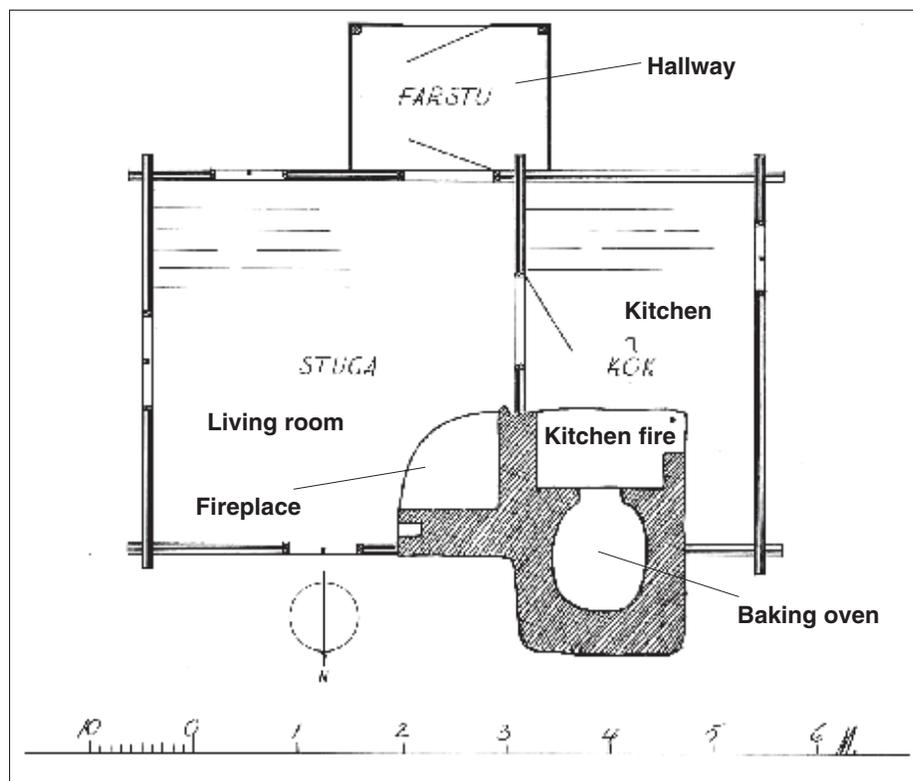
Let us now focus on the history of the secondary meaning of the word *torp*. In the 19th century the Swedish population grew explosively, due in part to the introduction of the cowpox vaccine, which drastically reduced infant mortality, and – where a family had experienced that only one or two children survived infancy – now with the introduction of the vaccine, the parents could view their families of seven, eight, nine, and even ten children growing up to adulthood. As the families grew, the farms, which had



A soldier's torp in Ransäter, Värmland.

been in the same family, perhaps for centuries, suddenly were no longer able to feed the many additional mouths. Add to this the fact that the nation's laws precluded that, at the death of the farm owner, the farm could be carved up for the heirs. Usually the farm was therefore inherited by the eldest son. The remaining children had to make their own way, either by hiring out as farm hands and maid servants to a neighboring farmer, joining the army, or

taking up a village trade such as that of a cobbler, a tailor, or a carpenter. For those who wished to remain on the land and at the same time to stay at least semi-independent, there was one other choice, that of establishing one's own existence on land which belonged to a farm owner. This land, usually the most unproductive, was quite often located on the outskirts of the village near the edge of the forest. This was of course encumbered land, and the settler who worked it



A floor plan from a torp in Blekinge. Scale in meters.



*A miner's torp in Värmland.*

was obligated to provide the owner with a certain number of free work days during the year. In return the *torpare* worked his plot of ground, seldom larger than a couple of acres, where he could plant potatoes, grow vegetables and a bit of hay for the lone cow, a couple of pigs, and a few chickens. Occasionally the land area was large enough also to support a horse.

But there were problems, inasmuch as the farm owner wanted his *torpare* to work during the busiest seasons, the time of planting, harvesting, slaughtering, fence mending, and the repairing of roads. The crofter had to adjust his own schedule to the demands of the owner, thereby finding himself scrambling at odd hours accomplishing his own tasks.

### The social conditions

The social conditions under which the *torpare* worked varied greatly from farm to farm, from village to village. Where the farm owner and his crofter worked together harmoniously, life was tolerable at least. Where the owner and his farm laborer could not agree, or where the farm owner made unreasonable demands which the crofter could scarcely meet, life could be frustrating, humiliating and miserable. This state of affairs has been amply illustrated in Vilhelm Moberg's *The Emigrants*.

These conditions were of course one of the prime motivating factors for Swedes to immigrate to America.

The farm owner and his crofter usually signed a contract which stipulated what each was to furnish the other. If the crofter became ill or incapacitated and thus could not fulfill his number of working days, he had to provide a substitute whom he was obligated to reimburse. If this were not possible, the crofter's wife had to step in and carry on her husband's duties, though she had a houseful of children which had to be raised, fed, and clothed. As a last resort it might become necessary for a

half-grown son to shoulder his father's responsibilities.

The *torp* itself often left much to be desired. Consisting of one or two rooms, having most of the time nothing but a dirt floor, it was an unhealthy environment in which to raise a family. The crofter could, if asked by the farm owner, work extra days for a stipulated amount in cash, usually less than the going labor rates. But by doing so, he sacrificed his own time, which was necessary to keep his cottage in repair, to plant, to reap and to busy himself with countless other chores.

### How many *torps* were there?

The proliferation in Sweden of *torp* and *torpare* during the 19th century was no less than astounding. It is estimated that by the year 1860 there were no less than 100,000 Swedish *torpare* who with their families accounted for 457,000 persons. By the year 1900 that number had dropped to 70,000 *torpare* embracing 357,000 persons. The gradual lessening of the *torparproletariat* and its eventual demise can to a large extent be credited to the ongoing industrialization of Sweden, which siphoned off thousands and thousands of men and



*A torp from Skåne.*

women from the farms; the expanding immigration to the United States and the emergence of the Swedish labor movements, which through governmental action were able to improve living conditions of the farm workers and thus eventually eliminate the *torpare* class.

## The *torp* today

In today's Sweden the *torp* has regained some of its romantic aspect. Modern Swedes want to go back to their roots, and thousands of city dwellers have returned to their parishes of origin, there to purchase the old family *torp*, if it still was in existence. If this was not possible, any other *torp* would do, so long as it was a *torp*.

These *sommartorp* (summer *torp*) have become a retreat and haven for the harried citizen from the city. Here he has showered tender care on a dilapidated cottage, refurbished it, modernized and improved it. Here he can dream himself back to an era when his ancestors resided there, often oblivious of the fact that they lived here under conditions incomprehensible to modern man. If he cannot find his ancestor's *torp* because it has been razed or moved, he can still visit the spot where the only visible remains may be a house foundation, a chimney, or perhaps a half over-grown well. Whatever it is, it represents something tangible to connect him to his heritage.

## Note

Much of the material for this article has been taken from the entry *torp* in the Swedish encyclopedia, *Nordisk Familjebok*, second edition I-XXXVIII (Stockholm 1904-1936), Y-XIX, cols. 418-422.

This article was first published in the *Swedish American Genealogist* 1991, issue 3.



This is what is left in 2010 of a soldier's *torp* in northern Skåne.

## Addendum

During the 1700s there were not that many *torp*, but the population explosion during the early 1800s caused the number to grow. Many more poor landless youngsters survived and wanted a place to live and start a family. They could then ask some nearby landowner to allow them to build a little house in some remote area of his farm and start to try to cultivate some fields. The fields belonged to the farmer and he got some of his land cultivated for free.

In 1907 and 1909 new laws stated that the *torpare* could pay his rent in money, and day labor was no longer allowed. Many *torpare* bought their *torp* at that time and those became their own separate property.

There were several categories of *torp*:

a) *Dagsverkstorp*. A *torp* where the land is owned by a farmer or somebody else (a nobleman etc.), and where the *torpare* were allowed to live there and pay rent to the landlord, either in kind or money, or by doing a certain number of days, working on the main farm. The house of the *torp* could belong to either the landlord or the *torpare*.

b) *Kronotorp*, see *Skogstorp*.

c) *Kolartorp*. In the middle Sweden area, called Bergslagen, there were *torp* which were inhabited by charcoal burners (*kolare*). They paid their rent by making a certain amount of charcoal and also a specific number of days' labor at a nearby blast furnace (*masugn*) or iron works.

d) *Skogstorp*. *Torp* built in the six northern counties from 1901, where the land belonged to the Crown, which wanted this area to be settled and farmed.

e) *Militärtorp*. The use of a *torp* with a little patch for potatoes and other vegetables, and pasture for a cow, was one of the things that made up the salary for an allotment soldier (*indelt soldat*). Depending on the soldier's branch of service those *torp* were called *soldattorp* (infantry), *ryttartorp* (cavalry), and *båtsmanstorp* (navy).

Elisabeth Thorsell



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# *The Jenny Lind Chapel in Andover and its Successor*

PAPER WRITTEN BY JILL SEAHOLM  
IMMIGRATION HISTORY AND LITERATURE CLASS,  
AUGUSTANA COLLEGE, SPRING 1986

Andover, Illinois, in rural Henry County, was originally settled and named by the English, but it is now considered a Swedish settlement with the Jenny Lind Chapel. Because of the large number of Swedes who settled after the English, the Swedes were more influential in making a name for the town.

The first group of Swedes to come to Andover in the 1840s were told that it was an already well-developed city. The pamphlets that they read said that the port on the Edwards River would be an ideal place for them to receive shipments from anywhere. From the descriptions they heard of Andover, they had to assume there would already be a place for them to worship in their Lutheran faith. They had no idea what hardships they would face just to get a church built.

## **No Lutheran church**

A Swedish Methodist congregation was also founded in Andover and one already existed in nearby Victoria, Illinois, but it was important to Andover's Swedish immigrants to carry on their Lutheran faith. They had no church building, but they continued to worship in various residences around the township. The size of the congregation continued to grow so that it became impossible to accommodate everyone who wished

to be involved and it was difficult to find a place for all to worship. The people thought that if they could only build a church their troubles would be over and nothing could harm them. Getting the church built was to be the hardest part.

It would have to be a sanctuary as well as a place of worship. It would have to be a school, a hospital, and a home for new immigrants. But it had to be done soon, and at first there was no money to build such a building. It was decided to build a chapel. According to the preserved original architect's sketches done by A. Wintram Inn, it was to be forty-five feet long by thirty feet wide. There are four drawings on the architect's plans.



*The Rev. Lars Paul Esbjörn (1808–1870).  
Photo courtesy of Special Collections,  
Augustana College, Rock Island.*



The plans show an outside view of the front and side of the chapel, plus a floor view of the first story and the basement.<sup>1</sup> The chapel would be built on ten acres of land that a real estate company had donated.<sup>2</sup>

## **L.P. Esbjörn collects money**

During the summer of 1851, Pastor Lars Paul Esbjörn made a trip to the East Coast to solicit donations, "visiting chiefly German and American Lutheran synods and congregations and their members in the distant, more populous, and well-to-do states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts." To his delight, "Esbjörn was met with sympathy and generosity... not only from Lutherans, but also from many non-Lutherans."<sup>3</sup> He raised about \$2,200 for the chapel.<sup>4</sup>

At that time, Jenny Lind was on the East Coast doing benefit concerts and she donated some money to Esbjörn. The chapel was named for the “Swedish Nightingale” because of her monetary contribution to the building of the chapel. Of the \$2,200 Esbjörn collected, \$1,500 came from Jenny Lind. She asked him to use it to build Swedish Lutheran churches for immigrants and to use his judgment to decide where they were needed the most.<sup>5</sup>

### The settlers do most of the work

To save money, the settlers would provide labor and materials themselves whenever they could. They built a sawmill on the Edwards River, or creek, and a brick kiln in which they fired the bricks they made themselves. During Esbjörn’s journey in the East, “the people of Andover were already making bricks for the new church. But bad weather had set in and ruined the unbaked bricks. The floods came and washed away the sawmill along the Edwards River. And now the timbers had to be hauled from more than thirty miles away through a swamp.”<sup>6</sup> Also cholera took some of Esbjörn’s best skilled laborers.<sup>7</sup>

The builders of the chapel had every intention of building a bell tower for the chapel, “pointing toward the heavens, reminding everyone by whom and for whom it was erected.”<sup>8</sup> The original drawings of the plans to the chapel show a small bell tower over the doorway of the chapel that closely resembles that of a one-room school’s bell tower. According to G. Everett Arden, in construction of the chapel, a ten by ten foot hole was left in the roof for a bell tower, but the wood they intended to use for it was needed instead to build coffins for the many who died of cholera, and the victims were buried in a mass cholera cemetery east of the chapel. Especially after all this, there wasn’t money for a bell either.<sup>9</sup>

### The dedication of the chapel

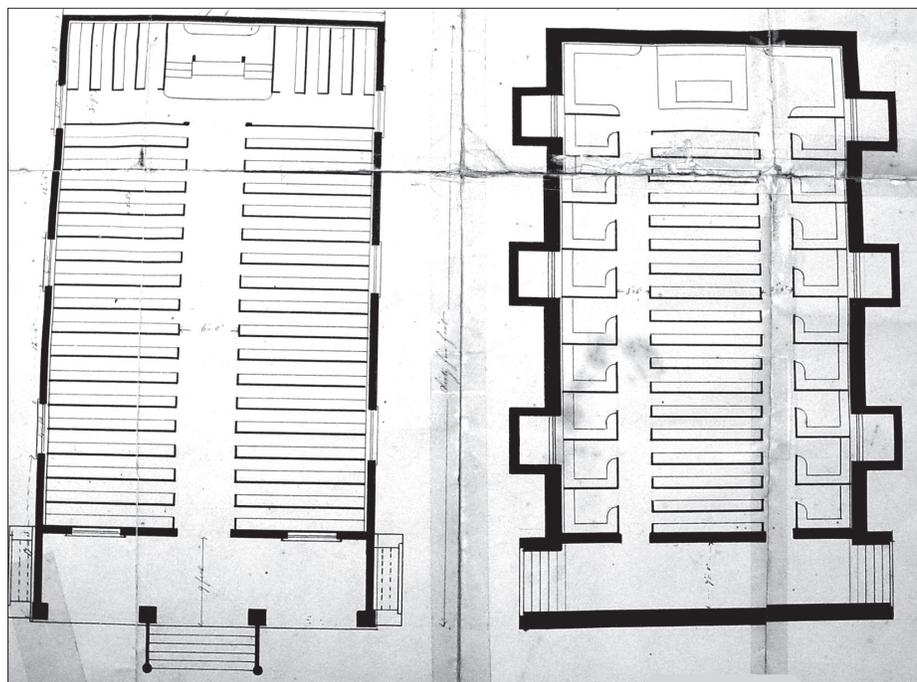
The chapel, later to be named for Jenny Lind, was dedicated on December 3, 1854, before the building was completely done. Many people now can’t believe how important such a plain, insignificant little building could have been to so many immigrants, not only symbolically as the first Swedish-Lutheran congregation in the U.S. “It is not at all built in

churchly style – one can hardly imagine a more prosaic and unattractive form, either outside or inside...the ground floor was a dark hole,...the pulpit reminded one of a kitchen cupboard formerly found in rural Sweden.”<sup>10</sup> It may not have been a cathedral, but it was all they had, and to many, it was home. The little chapel without a steeple or bell attracted more and more Swedish immigrants until soon there was not enough room in it.

The altar, pulpit, and altar rail are all similar in design to those of the church in Oslättfors, Sweden, where Esbjörn came from.<sup>11</sup>

Even though their numbers became too many for the chapel, the people of Andover still had it to fall back on during construction of the next church, “the big church,” unlike when the chapel was under construction. Arden talks about the desperate need for more worship space during the big church’s construction.<sup>12</sup> One of numerous emergency meetings was held to decide how to accommodate the growing church population while the big church was built. A quote by their pastor, Jonas Swenson, in a memorial anniversary album of the Augustana Lutheran Church says, “a hole shall be made in the aisle of the church (chapel) to permit the sound from above to be heard in the lower story of the church so that those who can’t find room in the church can go to the lower room and still be able to hear what is being said in the church.”<sup>13</sup> The original architect’s plans show a row of long benches in the center of the basement floor below where the hole would later be placed. The benches were probably originally there for small vesper services.

The architect’s drawing of the chapel shows the outdoor stairway to the chapel as one single center stairway leading straight ahead up to the doors of the chapel. However, the chapel now has two cement side stairways facing each other on either side of the doors. Also, instead of the two stairways to the basement shown in the plans on each side of the back of the sanctuary, there is only one



The floor plan of the Jenny Lind chapel. Main floor to the left, basement to the right.

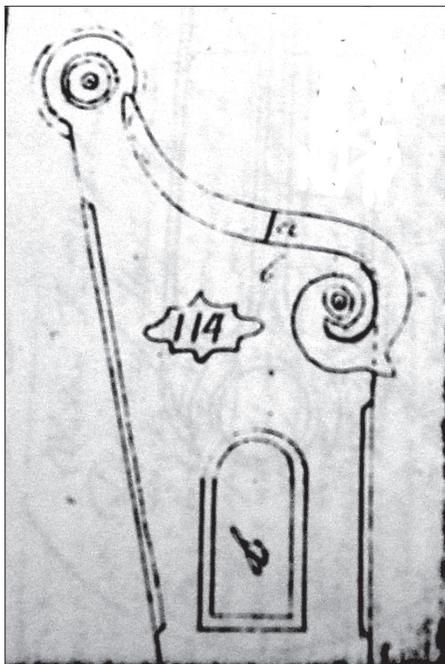


*Gustaf Fair (1824–1910).*

basement staircase in the southeast corner of the church. There is now a balcony over the back end of the first floor, but it is not shown in the plans. Perhaps it was added as another measure to relieve the overcrowding before or during construction of the “new” church.

### The chapel is too small

In September 1864, a building committee was established from the congregation at the chapel to begin plans for building “a structure of cathedral-like proportions to seat over 1,000 people...a bell tower, bells, and a



*The pews in the new church.*

great organ.”<sup>14</sup> Construction was to begin the following spring, but due to various decisions that had to be made, such as whether to build it out of brick, who would build it, costs, etc., it was not until 1867 that the wooded lot was cut for the foundation. In a personal letter from a member of the building committee, my great-great-grandfather, Gustaf Pettersson Fair, to family in Sweden, he stated, “It will cost at least \$20,000 and everything has to come as free-will gifts within the congregation.”<sup>15</sup>

The building committee hired architect Charles Ulricson of Peoria, Illinois, to make the church plans. They specified to him that the “ceiling and windows should be half-round in shape...and there should be a tower in the south entrance to the church... there should be entrances also at the east and west walls.”<sup>16</sup> As when they built the chapel, they decided to use their own materials to build the church, and again they made their own bricks. Every man in the congregation was required to donate one day of brick-making in order to prepare for the building of the church.<sup>17</sup> Gustaf Fair wrote, “200,000 bricks have been formed this summer, but another 300,000 will be needed and will be made next summer.”<sup>18</sup> The building committee decided to hire the architect to also do the construction. Mr. Ulricson agreed to the committee’s condition that he furnish only the labor and use none of his own materials; only those he could find in the town.<sup>19</sup>

The building committee was very impressed by the work the architect was doing. “The roof is self-supporting, with eight rafters, each weighing 5,000 pounds, connected with cross-ties, boards, and shingles... hopefully impervious to water.” Completed, the roof was thirty-five feet from the center aisle to the top of the ceiling. All of the interior walls were to be plaster over brick, and Pastor Jonas Swenson built the temporary pulpit and altar himself to be used until more money was available for a more professional job.”<sup>20</sup>

### The spire dispute

One thing that caused a bit of a stir in the large congregation was the top of the spire. The architect had finished the plans for the point of the tower with an urn. Pastor Swenson wanted a cross instead, but some argued that this might lead some to believe that the church was Catholic. At first they went along with the cross idea, but later, because of conflict among members, they voted to have the cross removed. However, the builder would not do it and no one else would climb the spire. Again, a vote was taken and they kept the cross, but managed to set a copper globe below the cross.<sup>21</sup>

In the spring of 1868, the brick-laying was complete and the workers could begin the interior. The benches were nearly in place and the walls were almost all plastered. The completed church was 125 feet long, sixty feet wide, and 136 feet tall to the top of the spire.

In another letter home to Sweden, Gustaf Fair sketched some of the finished details of the church’s interior designs, such as the woodwork of the pews and the stained glass windows. He wrote that the pews were of ash and black walnut and that the number 114 is “a number tag attached to the outside” and that there were no doors on the pews as in Sweden.”<sup>22</sup> Church construction was completed in 1870, but the windows were not fitted with stained glass until 1891. An annex was built onto the east side of the church in 1949-1950.

### Keeping the old church?

In the early 1870s after the big church (Augustana Lutheran Church) was completed, there were some people who thought that the old church should be torn down. A resolution was even passed to do so in 1874, but some of the old-timers who built it strongly protested. Eventually they decided not only to *not* destroy it, but to restore it. By 1895, the chapel was again in need of extensive repairs, and there was again talk of tearing it down, but it

was again restored and renovated.

In 1948, to honor the visit of Archbishop Erling Eidem and Bishop Arvid Runestam, the chapel's planning committee went so far as to remove the old pews, "which had been so picturesque a part of the original furnishings," and replaced them with more modern, darker-stained wood pews.<sup>23</sup>

The Augustana Lutheran Church and especially the Jenny Lind Chapel are important to the history of the Swedish-Lutheran church in America. Every Swedish-American who comes to this area has made or should make time to stop and see the Jenny Lind Chapel. The Andover people will never again think of having the chapel torn down, and because of their current interest in the preservation of it, the Jenny Lind Chapel is now on the list of national historic sites, and it may not be too long before the "new" church is, too.

### Footnotes:

1) Inn, A. Wintram, Jenny Lind Chap-

el architectural drawing, ca. 1850/1851.

2) Weber, Erwin, Jenny Lind Chapel: pioneer church at Andover: "an historic shrine of Swedish-American Lutheranism," Rock Island, Ill. 1975, p. 26.

3) Arden, G. Everett, The Story of the Jenny Lind Chapel, Andover, Ill., 1955, p. 3.

4) Norelius, The Pioneer Swedish Settlements and Swedish Lutheran Churches in America 1845-1860, p. 89.

5) Setterdahl, Lilly, A Pioneer Lutheran Ministry: L.P. Esbjörn and his family in Andover, Illinois, 1986, p. 9.

6) Weber, p. 26.

7) Arden, p. 3.

8) Weber, p. 28.

9) Arden, p. 4.

10) Norelius, p. 105.

11) Setterdahl, p. 20.

12) Arden, p. 6.

13) Augustana Lutheran Church 115th anniversary booklet, 1982.

14) Arden, p. 6.

15) Jacobson, Birgit, Sweden-America Private Letters from the Emigrants 1858-1910, p. 283-284.

16) Augustana church anniversary booklet, 1982.

17) Otto, Mike and Mary, Our Future is in our Heritage, 1985, p. 54.

18) Jacobson, letter from Gustaf Fair p. 284.

19) A Noble Cathedral: Century Tested, Augustana Lutheran 100th anniversary booklet, 1967.

20) Otto, p. 54.

21) Otto, p. 54.

22) Jacobson, p. 285.

23) Arden, p. 6.

### The author is

Jill Seaholm, Head of genealogical services at Swenson Center.

Her e-mail is:

<JillSeaholm@augustana.edu>

## Noak Olsson – the Swedish "American"

To have travelled across the ocean was often an accomplishment that the traveller was proud of, and if he/she had done it a couple of times it might have become the biggest thing in that person's life.

While visiting the Edsleskog cemetery in Dalsland on a completely different mission, we saw the tombstone on the cover. And once a genealogist, you can not rest until you find out a little about this person.

Noak Olsson was born 1860 Aug. 8 in a dugout on Törserud lands in Edsleskog, the fourth child of Olof Olsson (b. 1823 Aug. 18 in Mo, Dals.) and his wife Stina Bengtsdotter (born 1826 Aug. 29 in Edsleskog. Life was hard for poor people, and during 1869 Olof and Stina lost two children. When Noak was older he left and moved up to Bräcke in Jämtland, where he married Kerstin Danielsdotter, born 1855 Jun. 9 in Gräs-

mark, (Värml). They had two boys, Olof Gotthard, born 1888 May 5, and Gustaf Adolf, born 1891 Jan. 5, both in Bräcke.

In 1893 Jan. 5 they all left Bräcke and immigrated to Manitoba, Canada. In the Canadian census of 1911 the Olsons lived in Winnipeg, as well as in 1916. Noak is listed as a laborer and the sons are both carpenters. Wife Kerstin is now called Christina, and they all lived at 159 Harbison Avenue.

Christina died 1925 Jan. 3 in Winnipeg, and in 1929 March 31 Noak is back in Edsleskog, and lives with his sister Stina (b. 1853 Aug. 27) and her husband, *torpare* Johannes Olsson (b. 1862 June 16 in Edsleskog) at Lindheden. In the Edsleskog church records Noak is recorded as being a former railroad guard (*banvakt*) and a member of the Lutheran Zion Church in Winnipeg. Noak soon left

again, on 1930 April 2 he went back to Winnipeg. Nothing is known about this period of his life, but 1933 April 29 he is back in Edsleskog, again moving to Lindheden, where he probably lived with his sister again (records for this time are not available online).

Noak died 1942 October 14 and is buried in the Edsleskog cemetery under a nice stone, where he is given the title "Svensk-amerikan," Swedish-American. Perhaps "svensk-canadensare" would have been more correct, as he was a Canadian citizen. Still to find out is the fate of the sons, maybe there is an estate inventory for Noak that will tell more?

Thanks goes to Chris Bingefors of Uppsala, Sweden, for help with the Canadian information.

*Elisabeth Thorsell*



A scene from a Stockholm tavern in 1830. By Hjalmar Mörner.

# New Swedish databases

As usual, several new databases for PC machines were released at the annual Genealogy Days (*Släktfors-kardagarna*) in Örebro in late August.

The one most people were waiting for was the new **Swedish Death Index** (*Sveriges dödbok*) 1901–2009, which has information about almost 8 million deceased Swedes. The information from 1947 up to the end of 2009 covers about 5 million people, where the information comes from official sources and is supposed to be complete.

Information for the period of 1901–1946 has been extracted from the death records by hundreds of volunteers who have spent numerous hours in inputting this information into a huge database. This database contains about 2.5 million individuals, which is supposed to cover about 70% of all deaths during this period. This database is so huge, that it was necessary to produce a **DVD**.

The volunteers that participated in this project, called “Name for the dead” (*Namn åt de döda*) did come from many parts of the country, but not all. Especially the huge parishes in the cities of Stockholm, Göteborg, and Malmö did not attract enough volunteers, but the project will go on so the end result will be 100% for the whole country, hopefully by 2012.

Some *län* have better coverage than others; Värmland has 100%, and Uppsala, Skaraborg, Älvsborg have also high percentages.

The new Death Index works just as the earlier versions.

## The Swedes in 1880

SVAR released at the same time their new database, the **Swedish Census 1880**. Previously we know the similar databases for 1890 and 1910, but this one might be even more helpful in locating emigrants, as the peak of

Swedish Death Index 1901-2009, Search

SEARCH CLEAR

Last name: lagerlöf

First name: selma

Date of birth/ID nr (yyyymmdd): [ ] Change in marital: [ ] Date of death: [ ]

Man  Woman  Unmarried  Married  Widow/-er  Divorced Age: [ ] - [ ]

Place of birth: Country [ ] County [ ] Parish [ ] Province [ ]

Place of death: Country [ ] County [ ] Parish [ ] Munic. [ ] Province [ ] Then [ ] Now [ ]

Address (only the first ten letters): [ ]

GO! Insert character: å ä ö ü



World-famous author Selma Lagerlöf is here used as an example for the Death Index search. Just fill in the name of the person you want to look at (above), and then you get a number of hits in the Results window (below), and click your way down, and look at the more detailed information for each one.

Swedish Death Index 1901-2009

Sveriges Släktforskarförbund SWEDISH DEATH INDEX 1901 - 2009

6 vada CLEAR

Hjelm, Selma Ulrika Louise	18441111
Johansson, Selma Carolina Elisabet	18500510
Lagerlöf, Selma Edt Emma	19041019-0045
Lagerlöf, Selma Othilia Lovisa	18581120
Ljungberg, Selma	18571219
Rådgren-Nord, Selma	18720322

18581120

Lagerlöf, Selma Othilia Lovisa

Mårbacka

Dead 3/16/1940.

Registered in Östra Ämtervik (Värmlands län, Värmland).

Born 11/20/1858 in Östra Ämtervik (Värmlands län, Värmland).

Unmarried woman.

Corresponding parishes as of Jan 1, 2010:  
Östra Ämtervik, Suzanne län (Värmlands län, Värmland)

Parish of birth in the records:  
Östra Ämtervik (Värmland)

Source records:  
DB, FS

SEARCH PRINT ABOUT EXIT

Swedish Census 1880, Child search

CHILD SEARCH CLEAR ? X

First name:  Year of birth:

Place of birth:  Cnt Psh Prv Cou Place of residence:  Cnt Psh Prv

Sibling, first name:

Father, last name:  Mother, last name:

Father, first name:  Mother, first name:

Father, occupation/title:  Mother, occupation/title:

Father, year of birth:  Mother, year of birth:

Father, place of birth:  Cnt Psh Prv Cou Mother, place of birth:  Cnt Psh Prv Cou

GO! Insert character: å ä ö ü

In this example is shown the possibility to do Child search (Sök barn) which can be useful if you do not know how the father spelled his name, for instance. In that case, fill in the name of the child and perhaps year of birth. Perhaps you also know he had a brother Fredrik and a sister Wendla and perhaps more siblings, then you can also fill out the space for siblings. There are many more search possibilities, but as usual fill in as little as necessary.



Sandbacken 5, Uppsala, where the Wattman family lived. Picture from Uppsala Stadsarkiv.

the Swedish exodus took place in the early 1880s. Many of the emigrants might turn up here.

Also notice that both databases are in *English*; just click on the American flag in the upper righthand corner.

There are also little å, ä, and ö at the bottom of the search window, which you can copy and paste into your search.

## Other new databases

The Genealogical Society of Sweden (*Genealogiska Föreningen* [GF]) had a number of new CD:s this year.

The first one is a scanned and searchable version of their journal **Släkt och Hävd** for the decade 1980-1989. This is the fourth volume, as the journal started in 1950.

Next is a scanned version with a name index of the **Wallvik family**, a publication from 1765, with about 1,500 names of prominent families in middle Sweden, all descended from Claes Eriksson of Falun in the 1500s.

Then we have a very useful book on a CD: **Det Anno 1735 År Florerande Sverige**, which is a directory of all people employed by the government in that year (military, judges, tax collectors, etc.) with a contemporary name index.

Another database has all divorces in Stockholm 1794-1916, **Skilda i Stockholm**, around 7,000 couples. (GF Website: [www.genealogi.net](http://www.genealogi.net))

Another organization, the **Svenska Släktkalendern** (Swedish Family Register) has produced a CD with indexes to the whole set of books from 1885-2010, perhaps 100,000 middle class people. On the CD is also a name list of all the 2,670 families that have been presented in the *Släktkalendern* since 1885.

Questions and orders for the CD:s can be sent to the SAG Editor at [sag@etgenealogy.se](mailto:sag@etgenealogy.se)

## Installation

All the products mentioned here are supposed to run on Windows 7 machines. You may have to disable your firewall during installation.

Swedish Census 1880

SWEDISH CENSUS 1880 Riksarkivet SVAR - svenskarkivinformation

1 selected records (Barn), Knut Wiktor, b. 1873

1880-3-90-6620

Knut Wiktor

b. 1873 in Uppsala (Uppsala län, Uppland)

S.

Man, single, child

Qv. Sandbacken N:o 5 6  
Uppsala/Uppsala domkyrkofors/ (Uppsala län, Uppland)

Place of birth (original source): Uppsala Uppsala län

Household: (Barn), Knut Wiktor, b. 1873

Wattman, Johan Fredrik	1828	Father
Forsberg, Johanna Sofia	1841	Mother
(Barn), Johanna Sofia Magdalena	1862	Child
(Barn), Hulda Fredrika	1864	Child
(Barn), Pehr Fredrik	1865	Child
(Barn), Ernst Johan Hugo	1866	Child
(Barn), Wendla Elinorbeth	1868	Child
(Barn), Anna Maria	1870	Child
(Barn), Knut Wiktor	1873	Child

CORRECT.

SEARCH CHILD SEARCH PRINT ABOUT EXIT

# Bits & Pieces



## Swedish Census 1910

SVAR, the subscription site, part of the Swedish National Archives (*Riksarkivet*), has now started to index the Swedish census for 1910.

Subscribers can now start searching for people from Gävleborg, Stockholms *län* (except the city), Södermanland, Örebro, and Halland counties. They are also working on several of the other *län*, and will publish it on their web site once in a while.



## American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis

During the late fall the ASI will host an exhibition called *Santa Claus, Coca-Cola, and Swedish Design* (November 6, 2010 – January 16, 2011).

This holiday season, the American Swedish Institute presents *Santa Claus, Coca-Cola, and Swedish Design*, an exhibit featuring more than a dozen of Haddon Sundblom's original *Santa Claus* oil paintings on loan from the Coca-Cola archives in Atlanta, GA.

The exhibit also explores Sundblom's upbringing, development as a young artist, and career, and showcases an assemblage of about 100 items from Minnesota Coca-Cola collectors.

## “Chronicling America” updated

Library of Congress has updated their newspaper site “Chronicling America”. It now has about 2.7 million pages from 348 newspapers, published between 1860–1922.

*Link on the links page!*

## Scandinavian boat graves in Estonia

Recently Estonian archeologists found two boat graves on the island of Ösel off the Estonian coast. In the grave they found first there were the remains of seven individuals with many weapons and tools, and also many bones from various animals.

Another boat grave has now been excavated nearby, containing remains of about 30 individuals, some of them clearly victims of a battle. One even has an iron head of an arrow still in his leg.

The graves have many similarities with the boat graves from Uppland in Sweden, and these new finds are also dated to around 600 A.D.

(*Nättidningen Svensk Historia* 2010)  
*Link on the links page!*

## Anne Charlotte Harvey gets a prize

During the summer there was a festival in Munkfors, Värmland, which celebrated early comedians (*bondkomiker*) like *Olle i Skratthult* (Hjalmar Peterson), who was a very popular actor in the early 1900s in the U.S. after his immigration. His song “*Nikolina*” is still well-known.

Another popular comedian from Munkfors was *Fridolf Rhudin* (1895–1935), who also was a well-known film star. At the yearly festival a *Fridolf Rhudin*-prize is given out, and the recipient for 2010 was professor *Anne Charlotte Harvey* of San Diego, CA. She was for several years the driving force behind the *Snoose Boulevard Festival* in Minneapolis, which commemorated the career of *Olle i Skratthult* and his colleagues among the early Swedish-American entertainers. SAG joins the congratulations to *Anne Charlotte!*

(*The Bridge* 3/2010).



## Colorado Genealogical Fair

The *Swedish Genealogical Society of Colorado* is organizing a genealogical fair in Aurora, CO, on the 23 of October. On the program are presentations by *Kathy Meade* (Gonline), *Lorna Nelson* and *Lenora Lynam* (McPherson County Old Mill Museum, Lindsborg, Kansas), and *Wilma Svedin Larson* (Family History Library of Salt Lake City).

Unfortunately, this event will be history by the time you read this, but check out the society's web site on the *Links' page*, *p. 30*, if you have interests in Colorado!



## The ASI new building

On June 15, 2010, ASI presented the plans for the new building adjoining the old *Turnblad* mansion. The new building will be called *The Nelson Cultural Center*, after donors *Carl* and *Leslie Nelson*.

The new house will have exhibition halls, a café, a shop, a combined concert and lecture room for 325 people, rooms for handicrafts, and also some offices for *Gustavus Adolphus College*. The new building will be opened in May 2012.

(*The Bridge* 3/2010).

# Bondeskog and the Frans August Svensson Family

BY RUSSEL CHALBERG

The place was Ljuder parish, Kronoberg län; the time was December 1897.

Frans August Svensson (b. 1838 March 10 in Ljuder) and his family were living on their farm called Bondeskog. Frans August was a very hard-working farmer who used the slow time when not farming to travel around Kronoberg and Kalmar län in his wagon selling glassware that he purchased from the nearby Kosta factory. Times were tough and the little extra income from selling glassware helped to support his family. Four of their children had immigrated to America and five were still at home.

In the fall of 1897 Frans August injured his leg while working on a building on the farm. This injury led to his death on December 23<sup>rd</sup> at the age of only 59. He is buried at the Ljuder Church where the Svenssons had been faithful members for years.

## The first immigrants

The first four to leave were Carolina Svenson (b. 1867 May 24 in Ljuder) who left her home in 1886 June 17, and left Göteborg on June 25 with a ticket for New York. Next, sister Hilda Maria Svenson (b. 1870 Feb. 22) and brother Johannes Edvard Svenson (b. 1873 March 5) left home together on 1893 Jan. 3, and probably left from the port of Malmö on March 9 with tickets for New York. They travelled in the company of their sister Carolina (Carrie), who had come home to fetch them.

The oldest brother Johan Wilhelm Svensson (b. 1864 Oct. 13 in Algutsboda) had left home as a youngster and worked in many places. He was recorded around 1892 on the special list of people who nobody knew where they were, *löslistan*. In 1893 he is again listed at home and is then said to have moved to Malmö 1893 Jan. 31, but probably also ended up in the U.S. at an unknown date.

## The rest of the family goes to America

The five still at home when the father died were: Carl Emanuel (b. 1875

Oct. 4), Anna Augusta (b. 1877 Oct. 4), Ester Kristina (b. 1882 Jan. 30), and the twins, Ellen Ruth and Lydia Naëmi (b. 1885 March 2).

The untimely death left the widow Johanna Johansdotter (b. 1840 Feb. 9 in Ljuder) and her 5 younger children the problems of operating the farm in what were already very difficult times. The older children, who had immigrated some 10 years earlier, soon persuaded Johanna to join them in America. Son Johannes Edvard even came home in 1898 to evaluate the situation of his mother and siblings. On April 13<sup>th</sup> 1899 she sold Bondeskog and left with her



*A present-day view of the Bondeskog farm in Ljuder.*

1. Torp, hagenhet, verk och inrättningar m. m. under öfverstående fastighet. Personens för- och tillnamn samt familjeställning, äfven som personens titel, om annan än den i kol. 2 angäva.	2. Yrke (tjänst, näringsfångl. Stäm (främmande). Lyte (fallandesot, sinnessjukdom, idioti, blindhet, döfdomhet).	3. Född		4. Födelseort (förening i län eller i stad).	5. Vaccinerad af hett koppor	6. Gift år, dag och månad.	7. Enking. enka eller frånskild år, dag och månad.	8. Infyttad eller öfverfödd.	
		år.	dag och mån.					Från förs. i län eller i stad, eller sida i förelämningsbok eller boken öfver obefintl.	år, dag och månad.
Frans August Svensson		78	12/3	Ljuder	✓				
Johanna Johansdotter		40	2/2	"	✓	1/31			
S. Karl Emanuel		75	31/5	"	✓				
Anna Augusta Svensson		77	4/10	"	✓				
Ester Kristina		82	30/1	"	✓				
Ellen Ruth		85	2/3	"	✓				
Lydia Nalme		85	2/3	"	✓				
Johannes Ored		78	5/2	"	✓				H. Schmidt 7/98

The last view of the Svensson family in Swedish records. Picture from volume Ljuder AIIa:1, page 380 (1896–1902). Original book kept in the Regional archive (Landsarkivet) in Vadstena, Sweden. Online picture from Arkiv Digital. Left side

family. Frans August had purchased this farm and home in Sept. 1879 for a price of 3,000 kronor and now some 20 years later Johanna sold Bonde-skog for 8,500 kronor.

Daughter Anna Augusta had taken a teacher's exam to teach small children, and moved for a while to Norra Åkarp in Skåne to teach, but decided to immigrate with the others.

### Over the Ocean

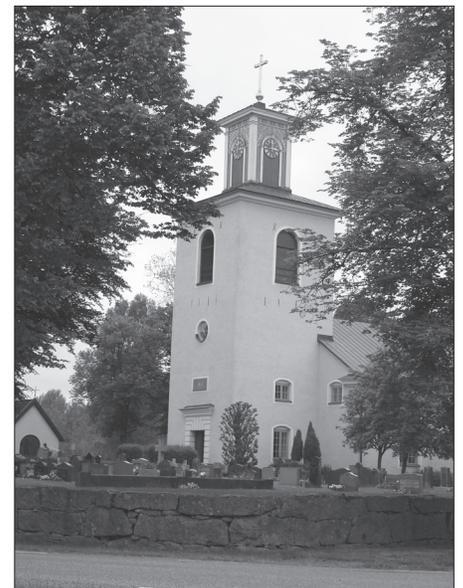
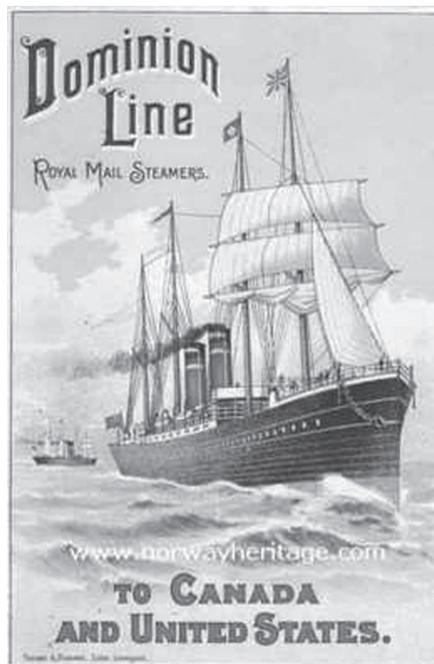
The family went to Malmö, from where they left on 1899 April 17 and traveled to Denmark and across England sailing from Liverpool on the S/S New England of the Dominion Line on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1899.

The S/S New England was a new ship and carried 1,200 passengers.

Johanna and her family were part of the 800 in 3<sup>rd</sup> class. They arrived in Boston on April 27<sup>th</sup> proceeding by train to Chicago where her older 4 children and a few other relatives were eagerly awaiting them. It was almost dark on the 31<sup>st</sup> when the train got to the south part of Chicago. The family persuaded the conductor to stop the train at an unscheduled place to let the family get off near the location of some of her Swenson

relatives. Johanna and her 5 walked the remaining few blocks to the awaiting arms of many.

Johanna died on Jan. 2, 1907, in Hammond, Indiana, and her 9 children were later to have descendents all over the United States with the majority settling in Indiana and Texas.



Ljuder church. The Ljuder church was built 1842–1844, in a style which was very popular at the time. It succeeded a wooden church from medieval times. (Wikipedia).

### The author:

Russel Chalberg, 11312 Alhambra Drive, Austin, TX 78759  
E-mail:  
<austinruss2sbglobal.net>

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Konst- brev- boken	År	År	Anteckningar om frejd; naltvardshinder; äktenskapshinder; utfridd lytning; hindern- löshetsbetyg; skjutlof; barns legalisering; uttråde ur svenska kystan; främmande trosbekännelse; främmande nationalitet; den församling i Sverige, som melder vid ankomsten utom riket tillhörde; m. m.	Väroplygts- förhållanden.	Uttlyttad eller öfverförd.		Död år, dag och månad.
					Till förs. i län eller i stad, eller såda i församlingsbok eller boken öfver öfverförd.	År, dag och månad.	
	96-7						
6	N						23 1877
6	N						
6	N	96-7-8					
6	N	96	Småskoll. ex.	Frikallad	N. Amerika 10/4/97		
6	N	96-7	Betyg att konfirmeras i Hofmantorp. Admitt. i Hofmt. 1899		Chr. Lyr 26 N. Amerika 1/98		
6	N	8-7-8					
	96-7-8				N. Amerika 10/4/99		
8	N	98	Wistats i N. Amerika 31/1-94 - 13/10-98. D. 7/4-99 erhållit Kongl. Maj:ts tillstånd att emigrera		N. Amerika 10/4/99		

Right side. Note on line 3: Frikallad = exempted from military service. Note on line 4: Småskoll.ex. = examined teacher for small children. Note on line 5: Betyg att konfirmeras i Hofmantorp. Admitt i Hofmt. 1899 = Got testimony to be taught for confirmation in Hofmantorp. Admitted (to communion) in Hofmantorp 1899. Note on line 8: Wistats i N. Amerika 31/1-94 - 13/10-98. D. 7/4-99 erhållit Kongl. Maj:ts tillstånd att emigrera = Has been in America from 13 Jan.-94 to 13 Oct.-99. On Apr. 7 -99 received Royal consent to emigrate.

## Some news about the Swedish Emigrant Institute

On September 15, 2010, the former director of the Swedish Emigrant Institute (SEI) in Växjö, Professor *Ulf Beijbom* contacted SAG and told us the following news:

The House itself was sold in the spring of 2010 to the *Växjö Fastighets AB [Vöfab]* (a real estate company owned by Växjö city) for a sum of 9 million SEK (half the cost of building the house). The *Kulturparken Småland* (a company that is to run the Växjö Museum and the Kronoberg Archives) is renting the building. Vöfab will take over the building on Nov. 1st. The SEI is to pay a minimal rent of 6000 SEK/month for the next 5 years.

The SEI has been closed to the public since the spring and will not open until 2011 (maybe).

The SEI has dismissed the majority of the staff, and is reorganizing the library for the much smaller area that the SEI will have to rent from the new owners.

It is said that SEI in the future will concentrate on its core work, which is supposed to be research. The reading room and the archives will supposedly continue to function as usual.

An agreement has been signed by the SEI and *Kulturparken Småland* that the latter will continue to work with the exhibitions in the house and keep them open. It does seem a bit doubtful if they have the competence and finances to do this.

This dismantling of the SEI has unfortunately been mostly regarded as a local matter, and has not generated much interest in countrywide media or at the Department of Culture. The loss of one of the foremost places for visits by American tourists seems to be of no concern to anyone except the SEI itself.



Professor Ulf Beijbom in 2006.

**SAG editor's comment:** This is so sad, and really a shame for Växjö city and the Kronoberg county government.

It is amazing that they do not understand the value of keeping the contacts between Sweden and all the Swedish descendants in other countries open and growing; instead they close the doors in the face of our visitors, who then go elsewhere and spend their money. They do get a bad impression of the area, and leave. I experienced that myself this summer.

# The solution of the (Hand)writing Example XXV

## Transcription

Såsom ett sanfärdigt Bevis, får jag i ödmjukhet meddela det Drengen Erik Pettersson sistl. Mikaeli flyttade i min Tjenst, men sedermera olofligen afvikit ur tjensten i Januarii Månad, samt att han under sin tjenste tid hos mig begått snatteri och derföre fått skälig Husaga, men oagtat detta, har han sedermera ej kunnat afhålla sig från denna stygga ovana; dessutom tar mig friheten tillägga det Eric Pettersson gifwer föga hopp om någon förbättring, och att jag ej vågar hädanefter antaga honom i min tjenst utan anhåller i all ödmjukhet om Konungens Befallningshafvandes åtgjerd att från nämnde Eric Pettersson blifva befriade. Saxån den 2dje Mars 1817.

*Lars Jonsson*

## Translation

As a thruthful evidence, I may humbly inform that the farmhand Erik Pettersson on Michaelmas the last moved into my service, but then afterwards ran away from the service in January, and that during the time of his service committed petty theft, and thus was subjected to household punishment. But regardless of this he could not let go of this bad habit; taking the liberty to add that there is little hope of Eric Pettersson ever showing any signs of improvement, and that I dare not to take him back into my service, and ask in all humility that the Royal County Adminstration will consider measures, so we will be free of the named Eric Pettersson. Saxån the 3rd of March 1817.

*Lars Jonsson*

## From the church records

In the Färnebo clerical survey [AI:14, page 115 [1816-1821]) Lars Jonsson and his family are found in Saxån. Lars was born in 1767, his wife Greta Ersdotter in 1768, and she is listed as handicapped and could not walk. They have four children, Cajsa, Erik, Maria, and Anna Greta. Lars is listed as having been an innkeeper, but is now a *torpare*, living on land belonging to the Saxån Iron Works (*bruk*).

He does have a *dräng* named Erik Petersson, born in 1794, who is just crossed out, without any note of where he moved.



# Book Reviews

Here you will find information about interesting books on the immigration experience, genealogical manuals, books on Swedish customs, and much more. We welcome contacts with SAG readers, suggestions on books to review perhaps. If you want to review a book yourself, please contact the Book Review Editor, Dennis L. Johnson, at <1\_viking@verizon.net> or Dennis Johnson, 174 Stauffer Road, Bucktown Crossing, Pottstown, PA 19465, so he knows what you are working on.

## A fisherman's view of Sweden

**Fishing in Utopia, Sweden and the Future that Disappeared**, Andrew Brown, Granta Publications, London, 2008. Softcover, 263 pages, Amazon.com, \$11.57.

For a significantly different take on Sweden and Swedes, this book is both engaging and a little saddening. The author has written a memoir of his recollections of Sweden past, and his current impressions of Sweden today. His passion for flyfishing and his quest for places in Sweden to explore his passion are the framework around which this book is disorganized and allows him opportunities to describe the natural environment he encounters in many parts of Sweden. Along with this, he adds his many observations about the country and the Swedish people as he experienced them. The writing is more stream-of-consciousness than following any special order.

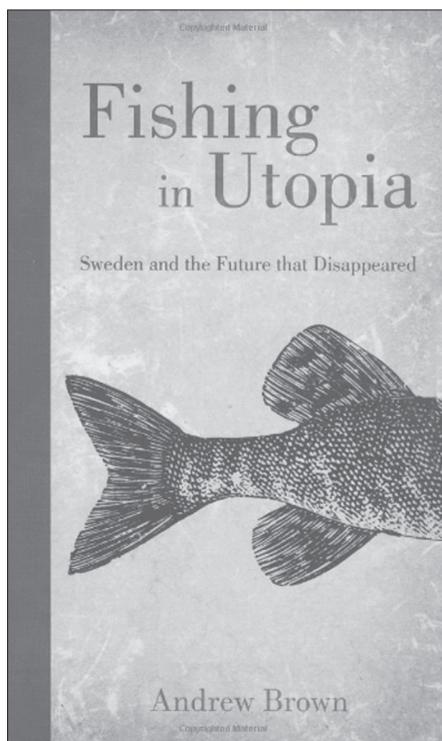
Andrew Brown, born in England, lived as a child in Stockholm due to his parents' service in the British diplomatic corps in the 1960's, long enough to learn the Swedish language passably well. He returned to England for his secondary education, in which he was somewhat of a misfit and, in his own words, was expelled from school before graduating. At loose ends, he wandered for a time as what in the U.S. would have been a "hippie." He eventually found himself working as a nurse's aide in a sanitarium, or old people's home. The

home was in Cheshire, North Wales. There Andrew met Anita, from Sweden, who had been sent there separately as a volunteer nursing auxiliary. These aides all lived in servants quarters on the top floor of a Victorian mansion, and tended to the ill and aged for about five pounds a week including room and board.

After a time, Andrew and Anita fell in love and, after a brief visit with his parents in England, they hitchhiked back to Sweden to meet Anita's mother and stepfather in Lilla Edet, north of Gothenburg. There they married and settled down into a whole new life. Anita found work as a nurse, and Andrew took a job in a small factory making pallets for Volvo engines. They lived for a time in Nödinge in a large workers' housing complex, about which the author

includes colorful descriptions of a very drab place to live. Soon a child is born, Felix, and the family moves to a little cottage outside of Lilla Edet. Andrew discovers he has a gift for writing, and has a few articles in Swedish published in various papers and magazines. The couple has grown apart, however, and soon separate, Felix remaining with his mother. Andrew was traveling to Stockholm frequently to promote his articles, some of which were picked up by English newspapers and began to pay fairly well.

Andrew then returned to London and, after a tense visit with his parents, sought writing assignments in England. Anita and Felix joined him for a time but both were unsuited to living in England and it became clear that their marriage was over. He wrote articles for the *Independent* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, and worked to develop his writing skills. His proficiency in Swedish and familiarity with the country brought him to Stockholm in 1986 to cover the assassination of Olof Palme, and other news stories. He went on to write several books, and is currently the editor of the Belief section of the London *Guardian's* "Comment is Free" site, also writing regularly for the *Prospect* and for the *New Statesman*. He has married an English wife and has a daughter. Twenty years after covering the Palme assassination, Andrew Brown returned to Sweden for a fishing holiday and to look up old friends, including his former wife Anita. He paid his visits and then spent several weeks flyfishing, mostly alone, in several places including the far north of Sweden. He





# Book Reviews

is shocked by all the differences he finds between Sweden today and the Sweden of his earlier life thirty years before.

In Andrew Brown's view, the affluent, egalitarian country that he knew in the 1970's had literally fallen apart. Refugees from many nations were welcomed, and the welfare system he knew had crumbled along with the industries that had supported it. One writer describes the book as a lament for a lost Eden; a story of modern rootlessness and the search for something to believe in. The author appears to come from a far left worldview who admired the welfare state he found earlier but on return finds that Sweden has moved to the right, moved toward privatization, and toward a little less egalitarianism. (In the context of 2010, it appears that Sweden is in much better economic shape than, for example, Greece, Spain, Ireland, and other European countries, probably due to this step backward from socialism and its very generous benefits for all.) He describes Sweden as now being much closer to the U.S. than to England.

In 2009, **Fishing in Utopia** was awarded the Orwell Book Prize for "making political writing into an art." The Orwell prize is the pre-eminent British prize for political writing and Brown received the Book Prize. The judges cited, among other things, "The descriptions of fishing are as enchanting as anything since Izaak Walton, but in its light and easy way the book is as profound as it is enchanting."

I found Brown to have a unique

skill for rich and poetic descriptions of the nature he found in Sweden and of various Swedes that he met or befriended – he has a special gift for this kind of writing. For a flyfisherman, I would think the book would be captivating. It is one free spirit's view of the Sweden of his early life and then of his later life in revisiting the country. As a resident for some years, his experience and impressions no doubt differ from that of a visitor or tourist. My main disappointment was in the apparent rootlessness of the author, who could leave a wife and child of his youth

with little regret, and even at the mature age of about sixty years has still found little to believe in beyond his own craft, and flyfishing.

Dennis Johnson



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# Book Reviews

## A Swedish city: Chicago

**Chicago's Swedes, *They spoke from the heart***, Lilly Setterdahl, Publisher not given, 234 pages, illustrated, softcover, Amazon.com, \$19.95 plus shipping.

In her thirteenth non-fiction book, Lilly Setterdahl continues to add to the literature about Swedes and Swedish-Americans in the U.S. This volume is a collection of 340 oral histories and 300 photographs about Swedes in Chicago, the American city with the largest number of persons of Swedish descent in the U.S. Mrs. Setterdahl's late husband, Lennart, was an avid collector of oral histories from Swedish immigrants throughout the U.S. from the 1960's to the mid-1990's, mostly for the Emigrant Institute in Växjö, Sweden. Lilly has collected and organized her book around the materials Lennart collected about Swedes in Chicago.

The book presents these materials in six sections, based on the year of birth in Sweden of the individual being described, beginning with the period 1873-1899, then 1900-1909, 1910-1929, 1930-1965, and finally those who were born in the U.S. of Swedish parents in two groups, 1883-1919 and 1920-1943. Included also is a name index at the rear to assist readers or researchers in locating persons of interest to them. The common theme is the residence in Chicago or nearby suburbs of the individuals discussed. A photo section at the beginning illustrates many well-

known Swedish Chicago landmarks, churches, lodge halls, and other buildings including the first home of the Swedish-American museum and the present home of the same Museum.

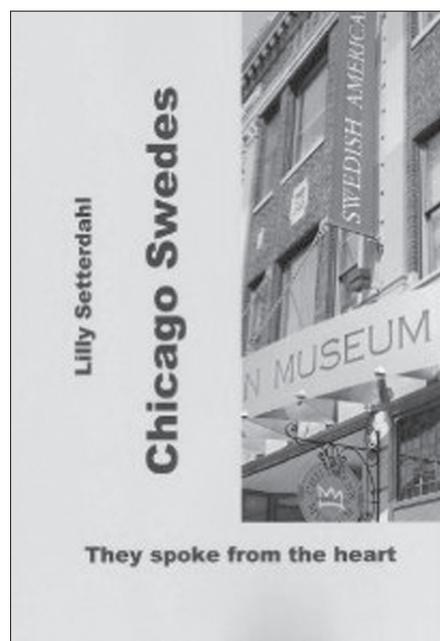
In her introduction, the author tells a brief history of the settlement of Chicago by Swedes beginning in the 1840's, some originally headed for Wisconsin or for Bishop Hill in Illinois. The largest numbers of Swedes to settle in Chicago were born between 1890 and 1909, and came to Chicago seeking work in that city, a fast-growing town where jobs for newcomers were plentiful in the years from 1890 through the beginning of the Great Depression at the end of the 1920's.

Large numbers of Swedes came to the U.S. earlier, in the period 1860-1890, but most of these immigrants headed for farm states such as Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas in search of land. Some of these also settled in Chicago but the claiming of most good farm lands and the coming of the Industrial Revolution caused later Swedes to head for the larger cities and urban jobs.

The book presents profiles of each of the persons in alphabetical order by surname in the groups by year of their birth described above. Spouses are sometimes included next to their husband, or sometimes separately. Each profile first provides a few quotations from their oral history about their lives in Sweden and their experiences as an immigrant or child of immigrants. The last paragraph in each profile gives the person's primary or current place of residence in the U.S., their place of birth and, usually, of their parents in Sweden and a few facts about their families, the ship on which they traveled, and their occupation in the U.S. Where available, information about their spouse and children is added. (Many of those giving interviews some years ago are now deceased.) There is a photograph of almost all of those included, and a reference is given with each of the profiles to enable a researcher to locate and listen to the oral history on file, either at the Vasa archives at Bishop Hill, Ill., or at the Emigrant Institute in Sweden.

Reading this collection of interviews as a whole gives the reader a fascinating view of the extraordinary variety of circumstances these Swedes encountered in their lives. Many planned to stay in the U.S. only a few years, and then return home, but most did not. Often those who went back to Sweden found themselves dissatisfied and returned again to the U.S. Reasons for leaving were lack of opportunity in Sweden, encouragement, and often free tickets, sent by family members or siblings who had already come to America. Many were born into very large families in Sweden, with as many as twelve or more children, yet in Chicago few had more than one or two or, occasionally, three children.

Few of the Swedes had any advanced education when they arrived, but nearly all could read and write. Women most frequently worked as





# Book Reviews

introduction and opening to the tracing of your own family tree and family history in Sweden.

*Dennis L. Johnson*

maids until they married and became homemakers, but others worked as teachers, cooks, waitresses, and nurses. Men were frequently carpenters, tailors, and builders, or engaged in the building trades. A few became pastors, artists, writers, musicians, or joined a profession after obtaining more education.

The most common church affiliation was Lutheran, followed by Mission Covenant, Methodist, Baptist, and several other denominations. Most belonged to various societies and clubs including Svithiod, Vikings, Vasa, and others. Other activities included singing clubs, Daughters of Sweden, Odd Fellows, Swedish Guild, and Svea. Their Swedish origins included nearly all provinces, although the most numerous seemed to be Småland, Dalsland, and Dalarna. Most came directly to Chicago, but some made Chicago their second destination after first trying various other locations from upper Michigan to Minnesota.

Coincidentally, my wife's family were also Chicago Swedes between 1929 and 1943, but left too early to be interviewed by Lennart Setterdahl. Her father, Elmer Stonefelt [Stenfelt], was an engineer with Western Electric Company, having been born in 1896 in South Dakota to a family of Swedish immigrants. They later moved to Wisconsin and Minnesota.

To the general reader of Swedish-American history, this book adds another interesting facet to the Swedish immigrant experience in one important city in America. If your own family member is included in this collection of profiles of Swedes in Chicago, this book may give you an

## A family from Östervallskog

**Tales of a New-line, and related stories**, Ronald J. Newlin, received June 10, 2010, softcover, 189 pages, Ill., publisher not given, no price given. Ronald J. Newlin, <rinewlin@gmail.com>.

This self-published family story was received recently from the author, Ronald Newlin, of Saukville, Wisconsin. Newlin writes: "I have written a book of the experiences of my ancestors, all of whom came from the border region of Sweden/Norway, and settled in upper Michigan. It is written 'as it might have been' because records were not easy to find."

As many writers have done, Newlin has uncovered the basic facts about the families described, then uses his imagination and research to present this information in an interesting and readable way as if their stories and experiences of immigration and settlement were more fully known. The families described all left their homes in and around Östervallskog parish, in Värmland near the Norwegian border, to farm in the little settlement of Bethel, near Wallace, Michigan. This was in a fairly remote location on the west shore of Lake Michigan's Green Bay, where upper Michigan meets northern Wisconsin.

The author is a great-grandson of Anders Persson from Östervallskog, who came to Bethel in 1875 to stake a claim on land outside of Wallace. He came to Wallace through a friend, Andrew Oleson, who had immigrated

a few years earlier. He was shortly followed by his fiancée, Ingeborg Eriksson, his brother Ole and his wife Nettie, and another friend and his wife, Nils and Maria Andersson. The tales in this book center on the experiences of these four immigrant families and their children in ten chapters. The related stories add to these stories with information about other relatives or friends of the initial four.

Many immigrants changed their names upon moving to the U.S., for a variety of reasons. Anders and his brother Ole decided on a new name entirely, deciding that they were to establish a new line of families in America. They decided on the name Ny-lin (or new line), which was to morph into the names Andrew and Ole Newlin. This became the family name of their descendants in the new land.

The ten chapters of the book describe the process of immigrating to the U.S., deciding on land to claim, and the difficulties of becoming established farmers in their new Michigan community by these four families. Building their homes, farming land never before put to the plow, building up their farms, building a community church, raising their children, and other activities are all described in some detail. These experiences were unique in some ways yet had much in common with the stories of other pioneer farmers in the Midwest. Northern Michigan was a less hospitable location than many others, with its harsh northern climate, farmland marginal in character, and remote location, but these settlers made the best of it. With the coming of mechanized agriculture, farms became much larger in size and many of these marginal locations, suitable for the 80 to 160 acres of 19<sup>th</sup> century horse farming which needed large families to operate, have been abandoned or turned to other uses. Most children, now sur-

# Book Reviews



plus to mechanized farming, moved away to larger cities to further their education or take up industrial or commercial employment.

The author has included a number of photographs, recent and historic, that show many of the persons who are subjects of the stories, their homesteads, and also photos taken by Newlin while visiting Sweden and the farms, buildings, and churches familiar to the immigrants described in the book, who left Sweden for America in the 1880's. Newlin also met with several descendants of these immigrants and obtained other information incorporated into *Tales of a New Line*.

Today, Wallace, Michigan, is a small community in Mellen Township, Michigan. The township has a

population of 1,260 people (2000 census) but had 1,821 people in 1900. This reflects the general reduction in population of rural areas in the U.S. with the urbanization of the nation since 1900. The town of Bethel no longer appears on the map, but the Bethel Mission Church was still standing in 1950.

The related stories included in the book of other relatives of the Newlin family or their friends are also of interest in adding to the overall picture of the immigrant experience in America.

For a member of this family or for their remaining relatives in Sweden, this book offers a great deal of information which is generally lost to succeeding generations, and the author is to be commended for his efforts in recording the history and experiences of these families.

The book also helps fill out the picture of such facets of immigration as the reasons for making the move, the fairly typical pattern of chain migration among related or neigh-

boring communities, and the religious and spiritual lives of the people involved.

Readers can learn more about Swedish settlers in Wallace, Michigan, through an article in the March, 2010, SAG Journal titled "Chasing John Nordholm" by Paul D. Sward. The paths of the Newlins and John Nordholm no doubt crossed in Wallace, and a Newlin family member was one source for Sward's research for his article.

Dennis L. Johnson



## New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

For people with Norwegian roots it might be interesting to know that the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison, WI, in 2008 published the fifth volume of their major work *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States, a biographical directory, 1825-1850*, by Blaine Hedberg and Gerhard B. Naeseth (†). 491 pages, U.S. \$55. This fifth volume contains biographies of almost 4000 immigrants that arrived in 1850. The Center has a web site at <http://www.nagcnl.org/index.php> as well as a Facebook page. (Information from the journal *Genealogen* 2/2009, published by the Norwegian Genealogical Society, Oslo, Norway).

For those that read Swedish it might be interesting to know that the Friends of the Swedish Emigrant Institute (*Svenska Emigrantinstitutets Vänner*) has published a new book, called *Transatlantiskt*, edited by Ulf Beijbom. The book contains several articles by various authors, such as Ulf Beijbom, Jimmy Engren, Claes-Håkan Jacobson, Stig Marz, Margaretha Hedblom, and Klas Ralf.

In *Family Tree Magazine* (November 2010) there is a good article on how to organize your study/office. If your looks anything like mine with papers all over, and books, and then more books, there are some useful tips here. If you do have roots ther is a usdeful article in this issue "Back to the Baltics" by Liza A. Alto. There is a good map, which shows the different regions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The author explains naming systems in the three different countries with three different languages. Due to the history of the area immigrants from the Baltic countries, that all were part of Russia until shortly after World War I, can be found as Russians, Polish or Jewish. The 1920 U.S. census is the first where the Baltic countries are mentioned as birthplaces.

# Interesting Web Sites

All links tested in  
September 2010 and  
should work

*Tutorial to the U.S. Federal censuses:* [http://census.byu.edu/project\\_files/xml/page0.xml](http://census.byu.edu/project_files/xml/page0.xml)

*Scanfest:* <http://www.scanfest.org/>

*Historic Australian Newspapers:* <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

*Oregon Newspaper Index:*

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/dc/newspaper/index.php?newspaper=oregonian>

*Nättidningen Svensk Historia (in Swedish only!):* <http://www.svenskhistoria.se/>

*Huseby Cotter Museum:* <http://www.husebybruk.com/statare/indexgb.htm>

*Vital Statistics for Manitoba, Canada:* <http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>

*Swedish Genealogical Society of Colorado:* <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cosgs/>

*On Swedish Emigrant Families:* <http://www.swedishamerica.org/>

*Chronicling America:* <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

*The Swedish Emigrant Institute (SEI):* <http://www.utvandrarnashus.se/eng/>

*Beta version of Familysearch:* <http://beta.familysearch.org/>

*Links to digitized newspapers in the world:* <http://icon.crl.edu/digitization.htm>

*Digitized Swedish newspapers:* <http://magasin.kb.se:8080/searchinterface/>

*Genealogy tip of the day:* <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com/>

**All the above web links will be found as clickable links on  
[www.etgenealogy.se/sag.htm](http://www.etgenealogy.se/sag.htm)**



*The county court judge (häradssdomare) Jonte Henriksson, of Gårda in Nordmark parish (Värml.) with daughter Augusta, housekeeper Frida Persson, nephew Staffan Henriksson and niece Elna Henriksson. Around 1912. Photo: courtesy of Nordmark Hembygdsförening.*

# Genealogical Queries

Genealogical queries from subscribers to *Swedish American Genealogist* will be listed here free of charge on a “space available” basis. The editor reserves the right to edit these queries to conform to a general format. The inquirer is responsible for the contents of the query.

We would like to hear about your success if you receive useful information as a result of placing a query in this publication. Please send us your feedback, and we will endeavor to report your new discoveries in this section of the journal.

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## **Persson, Peterson, Pence, Olson, McCartney, Kesler, Carlson, or Wolford.**

Kurt Persson of Uppsala, Sweden, whom I wrote about in SAG Dec. 2009 issue, now thinks that he has relatives in America on his father's side.

Kurt's paternal grandfather's brother Johan Magnus Persson (American name: John Morris Peterson), born on 7 June 1848 at Katteberg, Skärstad, (Jön.), Sweden, died in 1936 and is buried in the Olena Cemetery, Olena, Henderson County, IL. He left 16 March 1869 from Skärstad to North America [*Emibas*]. He was married 4 July 1881 in Henderson County, IL [Illinois statewide marriage index 1763-1900] to Minnie Alice Putney, born June 1866, and had nine children:

- 1) Eleanor Ann (Nellie) Peterson, b. Apr. 1882, d. Oct. 1962, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Fred Melvin **Pence**.
- 2) John Major Peterson, b. twin Aug. 1883 in Stronghurst, Henderson, IL, d. Nov. 1941 in Stronghurst, Henderson County, IL. Married Maisie B, abt 1912 in IL., burial Olena Cemetery, Henderson Cy, IL.
- 3) Ira Brown Peterson, b. twin Aug. 1883, in Stronghurst, Henderson, IL, d. Oct. 1968 in Des Moines, IA, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Ida Adeline Morse Jan. 1912.
- 4) Flora Pearl Peterson, b. Dec. 1889, d. Sep. 1975 in Monmouth, Warren County, IL, burial Olena Cemetery. Married to Ralph Herman **Olson** Jan. 1907.
- 5) Gear Edward Peterson, b. Jan. 1893, d. Jan. 1961 in Stronghurst, Henderson County, IL, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Mamie Hazel Dowel, Jan. 1916 in Burlington, IA.
- 6) Eva Agnes Peterson, b. Feb. 1897 in Stronghurst, Henderson County, IL, d. Mar. 1981 in Burlington, IA. Married John Alexander **McCartney**.
- 7) Marie Alta Peterson, b. Oct. 1898, d. Aug. 1978, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Vern Everett **Kesler**, Jan. 1918.
- 8) Thelma Dongola Peterson, b. Nov. 1901, d. Nov. 1991 in Monmouth, IL, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Elmer William **Carlson** Jan. 1926 in Mt. Pleasant, IA.
- 9) Lois Dorothy Peterson, b. Nov. 1904, d. Feb. 1989, burial Olena Cemetery. Married Calvin A. **Wolford** Sep. 1927 in Mt. Pleasant, IA.

Kurt's grandfather's sister, Johanna Sofia Persson, b. 7 July 1855 in Tolarp, Skärstad, also emigrated on 1 June 1875, and she left the port of Göteborg on 4 June with a ticket for Geneseo, Henry County, Illinois [*Emibas*]. It is not known if she married and had a family.

The website for the family is:

[www.petersonstaylor.com/tng/familygroup.php?familyID=fl&tree=20090503](http://www.petersonstaylor.com/tng/familygroup.php?familyID=fl&tree=20090503)

*Lilly Setterdahl, on behalf of Kurt Persson, Uppsala, Sweden.*

<lsem2009@yahoo.com> or <8626Persson@telia.com>

1298

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**Send queries to SAG! Everything is not online!**

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# The Last Page

Dear friends,

The big event of the now sadly ended summer were the *Genealogy Days* in Örebro in late August. During two days the exhibition hall was full of people, vendors, institutions and societies, all showing their new efforts since last year.

The biggest news were the new *Swedish Death Index 1901–2009*, and the *1880 Swedish Census*. Both are presented in this issue of SAG. Next year the Days will be held in Norrköping 26–28 of August. You might want to note these dates if you are planning a trip to Sweden next year. Even if the lectures are in Swedish, there is so much to see and experience.

Another thing to look for, if you have roots in southern Östergötland, are the *Peter Cassel Days* in Kisa in

late July. There will be various arrangements, and further information will be published when the program is final.

I had a couple of good summer weeks in our *stuga* in Värmland, when there were some very hot days (for us), and much nicer than perspiring in the city. Later on we travelled in Bulgaria for a week with one of our sons, his girlfriend (Bulgarian), and our oldest grandson. There were many things to see, as this was our first visit to that part of the world. It was rather different from Sweden, with high mountains and enormous fields of corn and sunflowers. It was challenging to be in a country where we could not understand the language, nor the signs in the street, as

they use the Cyrillic alphabet. We also spent a few days by the Black Sea (which was not black at all).

Back home I spent 10 days on the road with friends, where the husband has all his roots in Sweden, and wanted to see the places they left. We found most of them, which was exciting, and also a number of unknown cousins. This was not quite anticipated by my friend, and he left Sweden a very happy man.

Next on my program is a visit to the Swenson Center, to the Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

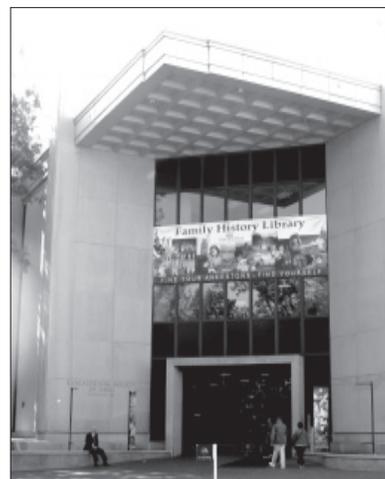
Till next time!

*Elisabeth Thorsell*

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## SAG Workshop Salt Lake City 2010 is full!



Welcome to join our happy group of researchers at the  
Family History Library in Salt Lake City!

The SAG Workshop is the highlight of the year – a fun learning experience and a chance to do your Swedish genealogy with hands-on help from experienced Swedish and American genealogists.

The social side includes both welcome and farewell receptions, a buffet dinner & entertainment.

Contact *Jill Seaholm* at 309-794-7204, or e-mail: <sag@augustana.edu> (Ask to be put on the mailing list for next year. The dates will be published in the next SAG).

# Abbreviations

**Table 1.** Abbreviations for Swedish provinces (*landskap*) used by *Swedish American Genealogist* (as of March 2000) and *Sveriges Släktforskarförbund* (the Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies, Stockholm [SSF]).

Landskap ( <i>Province</i> )	SAG & SSF <i>Abbr.</i>	Landskap ( <i>Province</i> )	SAG & SSF <i>Abbr.</i>
Blekinge	Blek.	Närke	Närk.
Bohuslän	Bohu.	Skåne	Skån.
Dalarna	Dala.	Småland	Smål.
Dalsland	Dals.	Södermanland	Södm.
Gotland	Gotl.	Uppland	Uppl.
Gästrikland	Gäst.	Värmland	Värm.
Halland	Hall.	Västerbotten	Väbo.
Hälsingland	Häls.	Västergötland	Vägö.
Härjedalen	Härj.	Västmanland	Väsm.
Jämtland	Jämt.	Ångermanland	Ånge.
Lappland	Lapp.	Öland	Öland
Medelpad	Mede.	Östergötland	Östg.
Norrbottn	Nobo.		

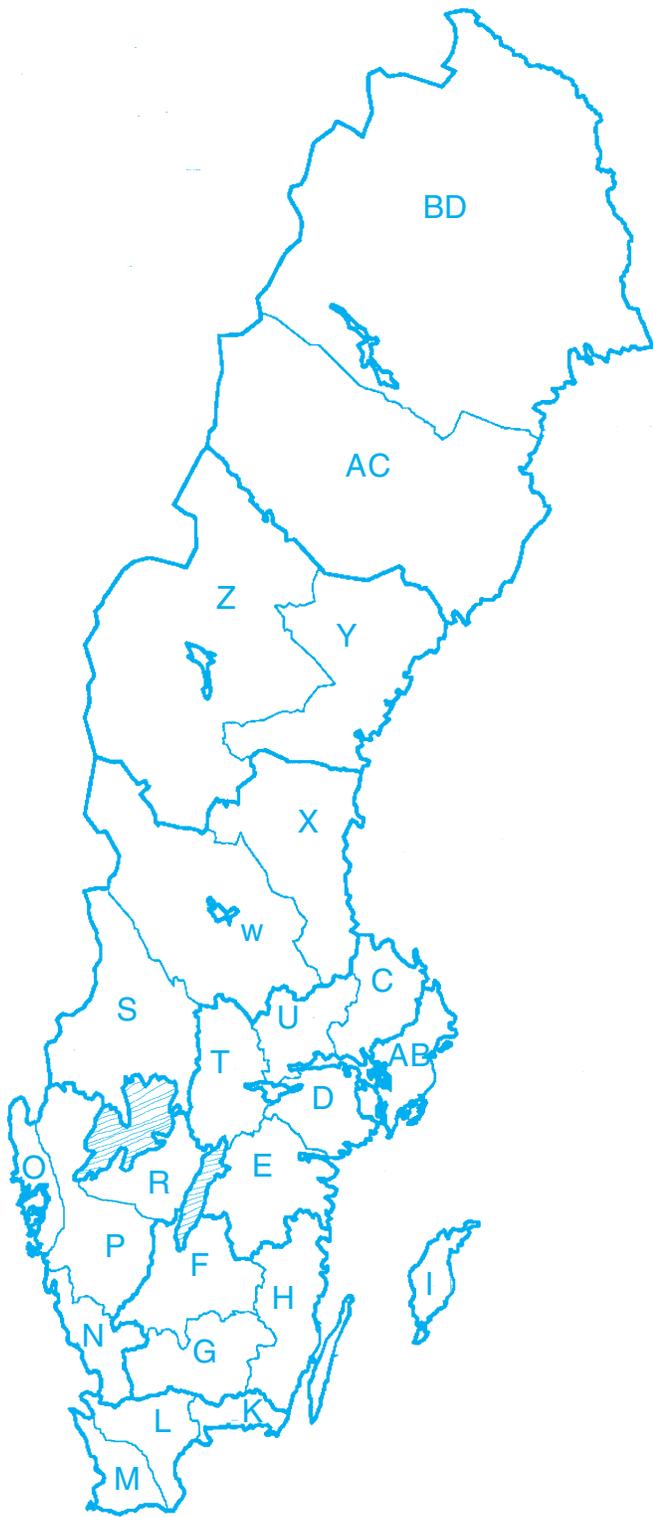
**Table 2.** Abbreviations and codes for Swedish counties (*län*) formerly used by *Swedish American Genealogist* (1981-1999) and currently used by *Statistiska centralbyrån* (SCB) (the Central Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm).

Län ( <i>County</i> )	SAG <i>Abbr.</i>	SCB <i>Abbr.</i>	SCB <i>Code</i>	Län ( <i>County</i> )	SAG <i>Abbr.</i>	SCB <i>Abbr.</i>	SCB <i>Code</i>
Blekinge	Blek.	Blek.	K	Stockholm	Stock.	Sthm.	AB
Dalarna <sup>a</sup>		Dlrn.	W	Södermanland	Söd.	Södm.	D
Gotland	Gotl.	Gotl.	I	Uppsala	Upps.	Upps.	C
Gävleborg	Gävl.	Gävl.	X	Värmland	Värm.	Vrml.	S
Halland	Hall.	Hall.	N	Västerbotten	Vbn.	Vbtn.	AC
Jämtland	Jämt.	Jmtl.	Z	Västernorrland	Vn.	Vnrl.	Y
Jönköping	Jön.	Jkpg.	F	Västmanland	Väst.	Vstm.	U
Kalmar	Kalm.	Kalm.	H	Västra Götaland <sup>c</sup>		Vgöt.	O
Kronoberg	Kron.	Kron.	G	Örebro	Öre.	Öreb.	T
Norrbottn	Norr.	Nbtn.	BD	Östergötland	Ög.	Östg.	E
Skåne <sup>b</sup>		Skån.	M				

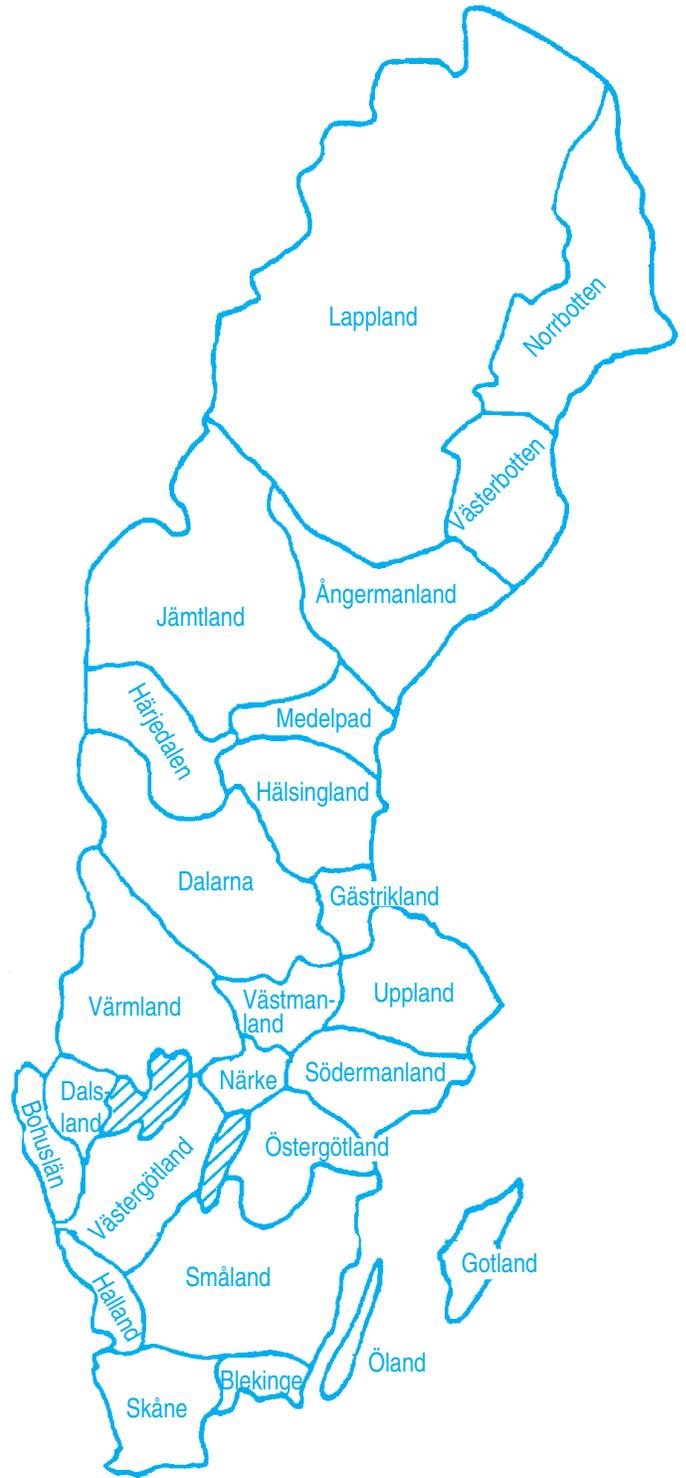
**a** formerly Kopparberg (Kopp.; W) *län*.

**b** includes the former counties (*län*) of Malmöhus (Malm.; M) and Kristianstad (Krist.; L).

**c** includes the former counties (*län*) of Göteborg and Bohus (Göt.; O), Skaraborg (Skar.; R), and Älvsborg (Älvs.; P).



The counties (*län*) as they were before 1991.



The provinces (*landskap*).