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## Carl-Werner Pettersson In Memoriam

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work, and having a rich family life, interesting travel experiences, and productive work.

## Endnote:

1) The book, *Building the American Dream: Swedish Immigrant Carpenter, Contractor, and Family in Moline, Illinois*, by Curtis C. Roseman, was published in 2012 by Heritage Documentaries, Inc.

More details and ordering information can be found at

[www.heritagedocumentaries.org](http://www.heritagedocumentaries.org)

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*A farm in Alseda during the wintertime.*

## Carl-Werner Pettersson in Memoriam

Airline Captain Carl-Werner Pettersson of Brinkelid, Åseda, Sweden, born in 1933, has passed away on March 1, 2012. His closest relatives are his children Nicke and Emelie.

Carl-Werner Pettersson was the foremost guardian of the contacts from the Great Immigration. He was unequalled in knowledge of persons and as a travel guide who has for decades re-connected thousands of Swedes with their “unknown family.” He was a friend of Vilhelm Moberg and organized, among other things, the last meeting of Moberg and his pathfinder in Moberg Land, Ted Norelius of Lindstrom in Chisago County, Minn.

Why he did not take over the family farm in Brinkelid, Carl-Werner has told many times. The airline from Stockholm to Malmö passed over his home, and in the attic there was a chest with America-letters and photos. The experience of digging among the old memories from his family at the same time as his ears were filled by the exotic sound from the airplanes was what showed him his path in life. Carl-Werner was educated as an engineer and got his flying certificate in Linköping, was hired by Linjeflyg, and advanced to become an airline captain. Now and then he pondered that chest of Ame-

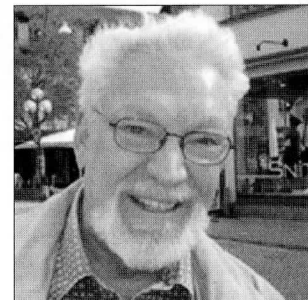
rica memories at home.

His search in the land of the relatives brought us together. One day in the early 1970s I was visited by an eager pilot who covered my desk with his papers. Could the Emigrant Institute help him? Carl-Werner started to unravel the threads

– soon American relatives could be counted in the hundreds and the Emigrant Institute had found its flying ambassador.

His first assignment was to introduce the Antipodian research project concerning Australia and New Zealand. In Chicago he found his base in the offices of the travel agent Donald Ahlm on North Michigan Avenue. In Minnesota he was seen so often that people started to mix up Karl Oskar and Carl-Werner. Naturally this symbol of “*Hälsa dem därhemma*” was elected the first president of the newly founded “*Emigrantinstitutets Vänner*” (Friends of the Emigrant Institute) when it was founded in 1984.

The happy combination of a talent for storytelling and a well-modulated voice got Radio Kronoberg interested in having him on air, whether he told about transatlantic relations, events in Åseda, or just plain talks accompanied by music. Request from radio stations in Minnesota made him the “Voice of Småland” in America. Possibly it was his radio engage-



ments that made Carl-Werner take out his guitar and become the lead singer of *Sösdala Brothers* which he toured with for several years. He became even more well-known as a lecturer, especially on Swedish aviation history. He never forgot his flying colleagues, and it was not by chance that the last of Carl-Werner's flights as a charter pilot was filled with veterans from Linjeflyg and SAS.

Mourning cannot be connected with such a person. No, it is sunshine and happiness that counts! Like the time when we together hurried between the hotels in Chicago, just because Carl-Werner wanted to shake hands with all the porters and receptionists that he knew. Or the “Nice to see you, Carl!” we heard all the time while we walked down Main Street in Lindstrom.

*By Ulf Beijbom  
Professor, former director of the  
Swedish Emigrant Institute*