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## The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society

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# Swedish-American Organizations

## The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society

The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society was founded in Biskopskulla, Sweden, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1989. The society is a friendship organization working to promote interest in Bishop Hill and the history of the Bishop Hill colony. The organization has contacts with the *Bishop Hill Heritage Association* and the *Bishop Hill Old Settlers Society* and promotes contacts with Bishop Hill and stimulates interest in this aspect of Swedish emigration history. Today the organization has 388 members. Each year the Swedish Bishop Hill-Society presents "The Olov Isaksson-prize" in remembrance of Prof. Olov Isaksson, an expert and friend of Bishop Hill.

The Bishop Hill-Society also operates the Bishop Hill Museum in Biskopskulla, Sweden (near Enköping, northwest of Stockholm). The museum is open daily during the summer. The rest of the year it's only opened on request. The holdings of the museum include books about the emigration, photographs, and other historical materials concerning the Bishop Hill Colony. During the year 2003, the museum had about 2,000 visitors. Among the holdings are Erik Janson's *Cateches* from 1846, Erik Janson's *Songbook*, and we have all issues of George Swank's *Galva News*, copies of Anna Lindwall's letter collection from the early emigrants, and a database of "Old settlers" in Bishop Hill. The museum also includes an exhibition of large photocopies of Olof Krans paintings.

Over the course of years, the Bishop Hill-Society has arranged various chartered tours both within Sweden and over to Bishop Hill, Illinois, in the U.S. The Swedish Bishop

Hill-Society visited Bishop Hill in 1996 to celebrate the 150th anniversary with the people of Bishop Hill. In connection with this event, the Bishop Hill-Society presented a gift of two "liars-benches" (*ljugarbänkar*) to the city of Bishop Hill as a symbol of the friendship between Bishop Hill and Biskopskulla, Sweden.

Over the years the Bishop Hill-Society has hosted several groups from Bishop Hill and other places in the U.S. At some occasions groups have been visiting during the Bishop Hill-Day, an event held each year the day before Midsummer Eve.

The Bishop Hill-Society is involved in various activities during the year including Bishop Hill Day and Seminars. The Bishop Hill-Day event usually draws a large public.

This year (2004) we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Bishop Hill-Day. A special program with music will be held in the Biskopskulla Church.

The Bishop Hill-Society publishes a newsletter *Bulletinen* (The Bulletin) twice annually. It contains articles about the history of the Swedish emigration, news from Bishop Hill, etc. In 1996 the Bishop Hill-Society issued a book called *Det blåser en vind* which contains many interesting articles about *Erikjansisterna* and Bishop Hill as well as the emigration in general. The articles are all in Swedish.

Address to The Swedish Bishop Hill-Society on the internet:

<http://home.swipnet.se/bishophill/>

Lars-Ove Johansson



*The Bishop Hill Day Parade.*