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# Researching My Ancestors . . . Froberg, Michigan

Frances Froberg Wooley\*

While working on a project for my employer, where I measured distances between dealers and their nearest distribution center, I spent considerable time reading road maps of all the states. This is how I happened to stumble on a town in the State of Michigan named Froberg.

I was very interested because Froberg is my maiden name. I immediately wrote a letter to the postmaster at Froberg requesting information about the town with the same name as mine. It was therefore a real disappointment when my letter was returned to me with the notation that there was no post office at that location.

It wasn't until I became totally involved with trying to locate my ancestors that I again thought about the town of Froberg, Michigan. So, I checked to see in which county Froberg was located and wrote a letter to the county seat, requesting information about Froberg.

Imagine my surprise when I received a reply from people named Froberg. They had been given my inquiry by the Baraga County Historical Society and since they knew the history of Froberg, MI and their name was Froberg, they responded and gave me the following information.

Olof Froberg lived in Sweden and never came to the United States. He had, however, three sons and a daughter, of which two of his sons, Victor and Oscar, emigrated to Minnesota ca. 1890. After about four years Victor returned to Sweden, where he took over the family farm, married and raised a family.

The other son, Oscar,<sup>1</sup> born in Sweden in 1874, worked on railroad construction in several states. In 1906 he came to Michigan, where he married Ida Pauline Soderstrom. They had known each other in Sweden, having lived in the same community. She arrived in America in 1901.

The story, according to one of Oscar's sons, is that the town of Froberg was originally known as Bellaire Siding, having been named after the Bellaire family of that area. When Oscar moved to the Sturgeon River valley in the upper peninsula of Michigan and did some logging, he needed railroad cars to ship out his logs. At times the railroad company set the cars off at another Bellaire in Antrim County,

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Michigan in the lower peninsula and well over 200 miles from the Froberg logging site. To correct the problem, the railroad asked Froberg if he would mind if they changed the name of Bellaire Siding to Froberg Siding, which they did. I found this bit of history very interesting and can only thank Edward and Hazel Froberg of Baraga, MI for sharing it with me. My Swedish grandfather would have been very pleased and proud to know that there was a town in the United States that shared the same name as his, even if he had nothing to do with the naming of it. And up to this point, we have not been able to prove a connection between the Frobergs of Baraga County and those of Berrien County, MI, where my grandfather settled.

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<sup>1</sup>Oscar Froberg came from Bjärträ Parish (Vn.) —Otto Robert Landelius, *Swedish Place-Names in North America* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL 1985), p.93.

## A Bible Inscription from Dalarna

An interesting Bible inscription with provenance from the province of Dalarna in Sweden has recently been found at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis. An old illustrated family Bible, printed in Norrköping 1851 has the following inscriptions, here translated into English:

On the inside of the front cover

“This Holy Bible belongs to me, Johannes Larsson Hedin and my beloved wife, Maria Persdotter, with whom I was joined in matrimony 7 Nov. 1859 in Lima Parish and Gråheden village. This Bible was purchased 8 Jan. 1860 and cost me 11 *Riksdaler* and 25 *öre Riksmünt*.”

(Then follows the first verse of Psalm 168 in the old Swedish Psalm Book, “Store Gud som handen räckte”, written by Johan Åström in 1816).

“Johannes Larsson Hedin  
Lima and Gråheden 9 March 1862  
Soli Dei Gloria”

—oOo—

On the end sheet at front of the Bible:

“As stated on the opposite page I was born at a summer cabin (*fåbod*) named Mattsås 21 July 1833. J. Hedin.

And my wife was born at Östra Ärnäs (also in Lima Parish) 11 July 1835 and died 12 Feb. 1902.

And my parents were Lars Hedin in Gråheden, born in Transtrand Parish (Kopp.) in February 1807 and died 6 Feb. 1877 and his wife, Valborg Larsdotter, born in Gråheden in March 1805 and died 12 Feb. 1882.