

Living in Swedeland USA

18th Century Rural Architecture

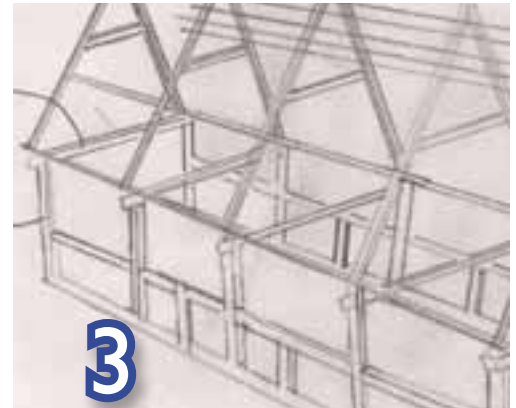
SWEDISH
Genealogical SOCIETY
OF MINNESOTA

Guest Article

Swedish American
Genealogist 

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firstly...

...I would like to talk about the current status of genealogy. A while ago I spoke to a fellow genealogist who experiences problems in getting local government funding for genealogical societies and events. This person felt that the cultural funding tended to favour sports activities for the young, and that it might even be a question of age discrimination since genealogy is regarded as an "old folks" activity. I don't know the full specifics or even if this is the typical case, but I still felt like I had taken a blow to the stomach. I had this naïve conviction that family research was up and coming and that it was spreading like an Australian bush fire across the land and all ages in the wake of the digital revolution.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for supporting sports activities for young people; I am myself a product of the mentality of team sports, practically being raised in the local soccer club. But why exclude the one or the other?



Along with genealogy comes inevitably a curiosity about how people lived and a general historical curiosity, not about kings and queens and wars and revolutions, but about the little man. To me, this history is equally exciting and more or less skipped during my school years. The genealogy movement provides a wide base of grass root historians. Not necessarily academically trained, but certainly curious and engaged. And the output of these, whether it's a family tree or it's a book on local history, helps fill the gaping holes of the curricular historical education.

Genealogy is very much a solitary activity. It's most strongly felt when you're stuck in front of your compu-

ter at night long after the rest of the family has gone to bed. At the same time it can be very social and also a team effort. You can save yourself a lot of work by connecting with other genealogists, by exchanging information and tips of resources. Sure, sometimes you feel like doing the digging yourself, but if you get the names and dates you can use the energy on what's behind the names and dates. It's the interaction between genealogists and the spreading of local history knowledge that we're trying to encourage and provide with Rooted in Sweden. And I hope you'll find with this issue that we're on the right course.

Joachim Schönström



18th Century Rural Architecture - Skåne

text and images:
Niclas Kronroth
translated by:
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Northern Skåne bole house (*skiftesverk*)

One of our readers has picked up on the opportunity to influence the content of Rooted in Sweden. This has resulted in our first request article. The request topic was *Swedish vernacular architecture - types of houses in various parts of Sweden at different times*.

With the good will of the writer, this article is the first of at least two, describing rural 18th century architecture in different parts of Sweden. The subject of this article is Skåne, the southernmost province. Diverse in culture and landscape as it is, it deserves an chapter of its own.

To complete the image of rural living and the *allmoge* culture in 18th century Skåne, the article starts with a description of the preconditions of the landscape, and a look on the village structure.

The preconditions...

Skåne is a relatively small Swedish province of about 4,000 sq miles. But despite its small size it is very heterogeneous; the topography varies greatly between the different parts. The prospect of farming varies accordingly. The nature of the land and the soil has determined where you settle, how you support yourself and how you organize socially and the province can roughly be divide into the southern plain area, the woodlands in the north and the transition area in between.

The southern part is characterized by vast plains perfectly suitable for cultivating of crops. In the central part of Skåne the plains turn into a hilly landscape with large areas of deciduous forest. The land is cultivated, but it is strewn with rocks and stones and the soil is not as

fertile as in the south. In the north the hilly landscape continues and crosses over to woodlands, rocky and barren.



Six thousand years ago Skåne was covered with forest. People hunted and lived off the forest and its inhabitants. But as migrants arrived in the province, bringing the skills of cultivation, the landscape, the forms of living and the culture evolved. Early on the inhabitants discovered the vast resources of the fertile land of the south. Before, people had followed the migration patterns of the animals, but the introduction of agriculture created a more stable existence. And it created the possibility and the need for a permanent settlement. The growth of population was a direct effect of this new stability, and during the following thousands of years people practically entirely cleared the southern part of Skåne of forests in favour of farm land.

The constant disturbances with frequent wars in the province during the 15 and 16 hundreds strongly contributed to the changing of the landscape; the few woodland areas still remaining in the south were eradicated and the lumber was used in the production of war ships. Today, only few fo-



rest areas remain in the southern part of Skåne.

In the early 1700s Skåne, which until 1658 belonged to Denmark, was a badly wounded province ravished by years of war, destruction and epidemics. Well, out of chaos comes order, and this certainly fits with the peasantry of the first two decades of the century. It was from the chaos of the 17th century that Skåne leapt into a new era which would bring a rise in economy and the social life in the rustic culture. Villages grew stronger and larger, innovations in tools and system helped make the production more efficient.

How you took advantage of the land differed greatly between the different geographical areas of the province. In the south they had long since been growing several pieces of land at a time, mostly in a three rotation manor; they farmed two fields and let the third one lie fallow. In the north there was not enough nutritious soil to farm the land in that fashion. Stock-farming was an equally important means of supporting oneself. The transition area was a mix between the two; stock-farming was important and they farmed the land in a two rotation way.

In the woodlands in the north, living was very much based on the forest. The fields were very small, and would only support a small household. Stock-farming has a

swedish class

“Allmoge” –

rustic culture, peasantry, or common people

The *allmoge* culture is a common used name, and still, it is not easily explained. The word *allmoge* has also changed meaning at several occasions throughout the years. The basic meaning of the word is people, or rather, group of people. It was often linked with rural population, which is logical since the great majority of people lived in the countryside until the 18th century.

During the 18th century, the meaning of the word glided as people started moving into towns and cities, and it was more and more used to describe people in general, or the man in the street.

long tradition in the area, but did not produce any profit of sort. The woodland farmers could however sell or trade products like logs, charcoal and tar. By trading timber for seed, they managed the strained economy. Oak and beech timber was in excess and the farmers would take the logs to the towns and sell it. Outside the towns, sawmills were built to meet the needs for sawn timber.

In the transition area, stock-farming had a long tradition, and was essential for the livelihood of the farmers, who had during a long period of time optimized the breeding of cattle and horses. As a side income they let southern farmers' cattle graze the large enclosures that were made on the fringe land of the villages.



The village...

In the fertile lands of the south, the first land reform took place as early as in the middle ages. The effect was a re-allocation of the arable land within the boundaries of the village. The idea was to gather the fields that were cultivated at the same time within one enclosure. This meant that the fields of the farmers were joined together to optimize the farming.

From the Middle Ages and up to the land reform in 1734, the land of the village was divided into inägör (close land) and utmarker (outlying fringe land). The close land included fields and meadows adjacent to the houses, while the fringe land was a common area outside the cultivated fields. The common ground was normally used as pastures for the livestock.

In the villages, the land reforms could also mean that the houses were regulated. A common form was that the farms previously were situated alone or scattered in small groups, always connected to the grown field or the pasture. With the land reform and the organization of the rotation growing system the farms were moved and created a larger and stronger unit. Most of the villages in southern Skåne started like this, with a group of farms gathered around a central common ground. The growing fields were gathered outside on one side, and the fringe pastures on the other side of the village.

The villages in Skåne were very different in character, and you can hardly speak of the typical Skåne village. There were, however, two general structures: the clus-

ter village and the round village, both pretty similar. The houses were gathered around the common ground, the church or along the village street in either perfect circles (round village) or in a more random pattern (cluster village).

In the north the villages were small with no more than ten farms. The farms were scattered and many times the village boundaries were hard to define. In the south the villages were larger with twenty farms or more. In size, the transition area villages were habitually in between.

The houses...

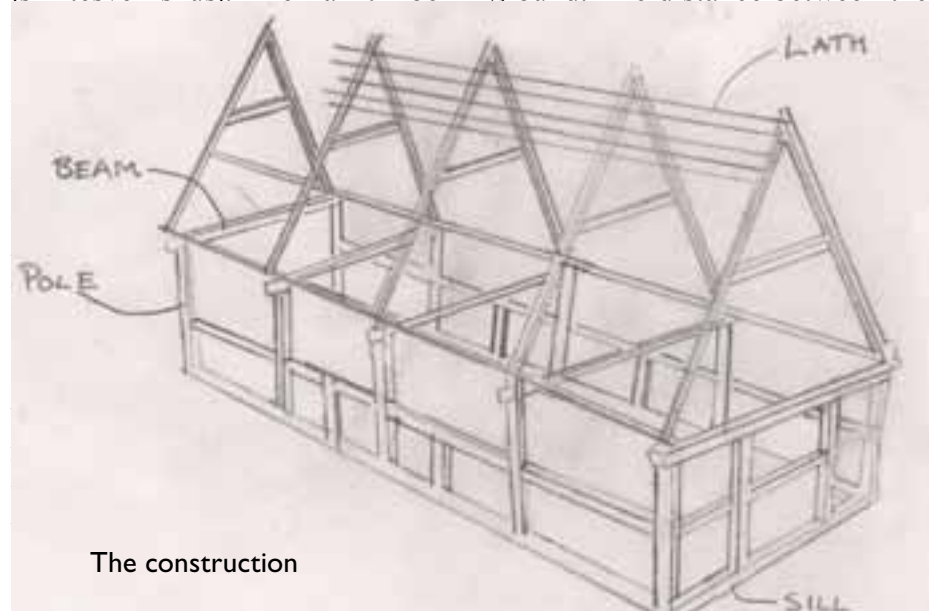
The styles and structures of houses and farms were strongly influenced by the qualities and the economical preconditions of the cultural landscape. Above all, two building techniques were used, resulting in the half-timbered houses (korsvirkeshus) and the bole houses (skiftesverkshus). The half-timbe-

of bole houses and half-timbered house was actually rather similar. The difference was the material between the poles: planks in the bole houses and clay in the half-timbered. The bole houses were cold and draughty, and in the north of Skåne the dwelling-houses would

be proper log-cabins, while bole houses mostly were used as stables, barns and lofts. In the transition area, however, the dwelling-houses of large four-winged farms were built with the bole house technique. Half-timbered houses could also be found in the transition area, with heavier timber and smaller distance between the poles than in the south.

The plains farmers built their houses with a large distance between the poles. The poles were sometimes erected on wooden or stone sills, but, more often, the poles were erected directly on the ground. The distance between the

“Contrary to previous theories, the prototype for house building came from the next door neighbour and not from mansions and castles.”



The construction

four-winged farm dominated. The four wings contained both dwelling-house and stables. The dwelling-house could include kitchen, farm-hand and maid's cabinets, living room and bed chamber. The all under one roof-principle is typical for Skåne farms. In the rest of Sweden it was more common to build separate houses for different purposes, the bakery, the brewery, the laundry and so on. In addition to the dwelling-house and the animal house, the farm consisted of barns, stables and store rooms.

Not all people lived in farms. From the middle of the 17th century a large increase in population occurred. This is the main reason for the re-introduction of land parceling (hemmansklyvning). Land parceling was a form of re-structuring of properties where you split the property into several independent units to be divided equally among several people. The splitting of properties came natural when the master of the farm died and the property was divided between the sons. As farming grew more and more effective, with new technical innovations, the farmers could also manage with lesser ground than before. The land parceling also made its mark on the way of building. The smaller households required smaller houses; there was no need to build houses with many rooms, so the one room house became more common. The growing lower classes also increased the building of small houses.

The collected skills of the village influenced the appearance of the house as building was a cultural matter. Contrary to previous theories, the prototype for house



Half-timbered house (*korsvirkeshus*)

building came from the next door neighbour and not from mansions and castles. The village community was vital for its inhabitants; inclusion in the community meant survival. No one wanted to be superior to their neighbours, and risk exclusion. A typical Swedish attitude, even today. Thus, the farms and houses all had traits from the local culture, and the building methods were reliable as they were picked up from houses in the vicinity.

In late 18th century writings from the southern plains we are told that the whole village, or even the whole parish, participated in the building of a half-timbered house. They used work shifts where the methods and the form of the building were transferred through participation and observation. The men cut the trees and erected the poles, while the farm-hands dug clay-pits and carried the clay to the maids who twined the twigs and smeared the clay on the walls. The sons of the farm served the farm-

hands and men with food and drinks. The wives and daughters were busy in the home, making food baskets as the working crew should be kept with beer and food throughout the work. Directly upon the completion, the building proprietor would host a “smearing party” (*klinegille*), as a compensation for the help.

This is a typical depiction, not only of the building of a house but of the social structure of everyday working life. Even if the work tasks differed, everyone did their important part to fulfill their common goal. 🌱

Niclas Kronroth is a trained Archaeologist with a history and antropology degree. He has participated in several excavations in the Malmö-Lund area.

Nowadays he works with distribution at the biggest regional newspaper, *Sydsvenskan*

He lives outside Lund in the southern plains area of Skåne.



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Dalsland
folk
costumes

Emigration conference - "Letters to Sweden" 13-15 August 2010

The international emigration conference "Letters to Sweden" will take place for the second time next summer. The venue is Mellerud in Dalsland. The event will be hosted by *Emigration Dalsland*, *Vasaorden av America* and *Släktforskare på Dahl*.

Anneli Andersson is one of the hosts who have spent many hours organizing the event:

"The purpose of the conference is to create the meeting between the Swedish and American genealogist. We want to build a bridge

across the Atlantic. There is so much to gain from this at both ends."

She was also the driving force behind the first conference held two years ago.

"Last time was a success with a great turn-up on two days of activities, with a good mix between Swedish and American genealogists."

It started with a Dalsland outing on Friday, including a visit to the herbarium in Dals-Rostock. Friday night's dinner was enjoyed at Skötterud's farm.

Saturday was spent at Kulturbruket in Mellerud. More than 200 paying visitors spent the day attending seminars and the two floor exhibition. The program ended with banquet and entertainment from Ove Clapson Band, and Ove Clapson performing as *Olle i Skratthult*.

This time around, the conference has grown to a three day event. After a proper marketing campaign, the hosts are confident that the participants will grow in numbers compared to the last time.

"This time we've started well ahead. We've been over to the US several times to spread the message."

This autumn's Swedgen Tour was also a good opportunity to promote the conference.

The three day Emigration Conference starts on Friday with a tour of the beautiful landscape of Dalsland.

"We will go by train and bus, visit interesting museums, churches and farms and learn more about the lives of our ancestors."

Saturday is the day of seminars at Kulturbruket, Mellerud. You can



Bernt Blomgren and Bertil Landegren



Ove Clapson performing as *Olle i Skratthult*

learn more about Swedish history and culture and meet with Swedish people. As it will be open to everyone interested in emigration history and genealogy, this will be the perfect opportunity to make connections between Swedish and American people.



Berith Blomgren and Patricia Anderson at lake Ånimmen

It will also be possible to book a 30 minute individual session with a genealogist to work on your own family tree. The day ends with a banquet with entertainment and a Swedish smorgasbord in one of Dalsland's beautifully situated countryside restaurants.

On Sunday the participants are invited to a church service in Bolstad church, the oldest church in

Dalsland. After the service we will have church coffee together in the old vicarage, which now is a museum.

The conference fee includes Friday lunch and supper, Saturday lunch, snacks and banquet, and Sunday church coffee with Swedish sandwiches. A personal one-to-one session with a genealogist is also optionally included. During the conference you will have an English speaking hostess for your service.

Anneli Andersson concludes:

“ We're very happy with the program, and proud to have been able to attract such distinguished speakers.”

She points out that the seminar subjects are very general on genealogy and emigrant history.

”The conference is in Dalsland, but it's not about Dalsland. The subjects are chosen to appeal to everyone.”

”We can hardly wait till summer!” 🍄

Sign up for the newsletter and read all details about the conference:

www.emigrationdalsland.com

Olle i Skratthult

His given name was Hjalmar Peterson, and he was born in the Swedish province of Värmland. He first arrived in the U.S. in 1906, working as a bricklayer. After a two year spell back in Sweden, collecting songs and stories, he came back to America in 1911 and adopted the stage name *Olle i Skratthult* (Olle from Laughtersville).

He began performing on the Scandinavian-language vaudeville circuit. Olle was a *bondkomiker* (peasant comic), and he dressed the part with a blacked-out tooth and straw-colored wig.

For many years Olle was the most famous performer in Scandinavian vaudeville. During the 1920s he toured the U.S with a large band and was enthusiastically greeted by both ethnic and mainstream audiences.

Read more about *Olle i Skratthult* and listen to some of his recordings at:

www.catfish1952.com/Olle.html



Veteran Volvo and SAAB at display outside the exhibition hall. Courtesy of Veteran Classic Dalsland



text:
Paul Wahlquist
images:
Washington County
Historical Society

Living in Swedeland USA

Logjam at Taylors Falls, Minn.
on St. Croix River in 1884.

It is easy to see why Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg selected the area just northeast of St. Paul and Minneapolis as the setting for his Emigrant Novels. The area was often jokingly referred to as "Swedeland USA". In 1880 there were about 65,000 Swedes living in Minnesota.

In *Rooted in Sweden* no 7, Paul Wahlquist started his story about the Swedish emigrants who ended up in Swedeland USA. This is the second part of the story.

The area started at Stillwater/Marine on the St. Croix and continued north including Scandia, Big Marine Lake, Lindstrom/Center City, Osceola, Taylors Falls, Almelund, Kost, Sunrise and finished at Pine City.

Here the immigrants would arrive via steam boat, or, later on, by train. Before they could afford to buy a home of their own, they usually lived with relatives. For those used to work in the forests, there was plenty of work in the lumbering industry. Millions of logs floated down the St Croix River each year to the saw mills. Sometimes there were so many logs jammed on the river that a person could walk on logs from one shore to other.

The immigrants used the money they earned lumbering to buy more land for their farms. In the winter the immigrant lumbermen would take their horses with them to the forests and earn extra money pulling the logs from the forest to the river's edge. Being lumbermen

was ideal for the immigrants because they worked in the forests during the winter, then they could improve their farms during the summer.

Immigrants who in Sweden never owned any land now became owners of very large farms. But how were these Swedish immigrants to buy farmland once they came to Minnesota? The United States had paid bonuses to the veterans of the Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, and the Mexican War. The federal government did this by issuing certificates (scrip) which entitled the veteran to claim 40 to 160 acres of government owned land in Minnesota. In some cases scrip was used to pay off other government debts.



By a Congressional Act in 1852 the scrip was made negotiable so it could be sold. Many of the veterans who held scrip for Minnesota land had no intention of moving there. Because the scrip could be sold the veterans sold their land certificates to merchants, bankers and land speculators, often for very small amount of money. It was from these ow-

”After the Church Service relatives and friends gathered at the home of one of the families, eat dinner and catch up on the news.”

to support the common schools, the state university and railroad construction. A state was divided into counties and each county was divided into townships. When a township was surveyed it would usually be divided into 36 sections. One section would be designated as school land. When the land in this section was sold the money went into a special

the Church became a meeting place for the immigrants. The services were in Swedish using the same hymnals they used in Sweden. But unlike Sweden the churches were not controlled by the government. Each Parish Church was independent and had its own governing council. The government did not designate a geographical area that would be called a Parish like the Swedish government. The immigrants usually went to the church closest to their home or to the church attended by other relatives and friends.



Loading of logs

ners of the certificates, usually speculators, that the immigrants acquired good, cheap farm land.

Another source of land was the State of Minnesota. The States did not usually have land to sell but the federal government granted land to a state which it could sell

fund for building schools. These schools were called Land Grant schools and universities. Most of the immigrant’s children received their education in Land Grant schools.

Because most of the Swedish immigrants were raised as Lutherans,

Because the farms were large and isolated, Sunday would be a day of meeting with other people. After the Church Service relatives and friends gathered at the home of one of the families, eat dinner and catch up on the news.

The emigrants wanted their child-



ren to be educated. So they would receive money from the government to organize a school district and build one room school houses within walking distance of the farms. Sometimes they built schools with their own money. Often four or more schools were located in a township.

The children in the schools would range in age from 5 years to 17 years old. Usually the older students attended school to learn English since most of the people in Swedeland spoke Swedish in their homes. Although the school year started in September many

The son of immigrants described living in Swedeland in his memoirs:

We lived in a little two room cabin in the wilderness. There were ten in the family sleeping in one room and the other room was used for the kitchen, dining and living. We walked two and one half miles to school, rain or shine. I missed much time in school because I had to stay at home and help with the harvest work in the Fall and seeding time in the Spring. Everything was hard work at the time.

It was quite a trip to church and too far for regular Sunday School

community to gather and socialize. On a Saturday evening they would bring food to the school and have a smorgasbord. After eating they would sing. They loved the songs they brought with them from Sweden. They would sing *Hälsa Dem Där Hemma* and *Nikolina*. Then they would practice their English by singing American favorites, *Home on the Range* and *Oh! Susanna*. They also loved to act in plays using English. This way the community learned to communicate with those people who didn't speak Swedish. But there were immigrants who refused to learn English.



One Room School House in 1906

of the students did not start classes until late October because they were helping to harvest the crops. Some of the school teachers spoke Swedish but the lessons were conducted in English.

so most of the time we had Sunday School in our one room school house.

The one room school houses were not only used to educate the children, they were a place for the com-

Another important part of the community was the General Store which was usually located in the same area as the school. Since most of the farms were quite far from a town, the general store was convenient when the people

needed necessities for everyday living. The store would sell food, clothing, tools and hardware like nails, bolts and screws. Almost always the store owner spoke Swedish.

The general store also bought produce from the farmers like eggs, cream, vegetables and fruit. The cream would be made into butter to be sold or the store owner would sell it to the nearest creamery. Once a week the store owner would load up his wagon with the produce he purchased from the farmers and drive to the nearest large town or city. He would sell the produce and buy items to restock his inventory.

The owner usually kept his store open from early morning to late in the evening seven days a week. But because so many of the people stopped by the store it also became a place where they found out the latest information about the community, who was sick, who had a new baby or who had died.

Swedeland, early in the 1800's, had been inhabited by the Chipewewa and Sioux Indian Tribes. The area had been claimed by both tribes and there had been wars over who controlled the area. Although there were newspaper reports that the Indians would burn the settler's wood and haystacks and steal their furs and traps, no one in Swedeland remembered this happening. Most of the encounters

between the immigrants and the Indians appeared to be peaceful.

One incident is recorded as follows:

Time and again an Indian chief would knock at the log cabin and show a quarter of a butchered deer and would do a few grunts and motions and Grandma understood

”Christmas was a happy time. Dad usually butchered a cow and a pig. Mother made Swedish sausage...There was Lutefisk and flat bread and many other good things.”

and brought a big loaf of her bread and they thanked and the trade was done until next time.

In 1857 the Indians suddenly disappeared from Swedeland and moved north and west. So by the 1860's when the immigrants started arriving in much larger numbers, they rarely encountered Indians.

Famines were one of the reasons why the Swedes decided to immigrate. Poor rural Swedes knew what it was like to eat bark bread when no rains fell so almost no rye and barley crops survived. The people already living in Swedeland wrote letters back telling how abundant food was in America. They wrote about the big farms they had developed. They told about their big gardens, how they butchered pigs and beef cattle each fall to feed themselves over the winter. The Swedes sold almost everything they owned to buy a ticket to Swedeland.

The immigrants did have all the food they needed when they settled in Swedeland but it was different.

In Sweden they ate *sill* (herring), salmon and cod. But Swedeland was over a thousand miles from the nearest ocean so they missed these foods. The grocery stores had barrels of pickled herring or smoked dried herring. If the immigrants wanted fresh fish they would catch them in the lakes and rivers of Swedeland.

The immigrant's son remembered:

Christmas was a happy time. Dad usually butchered a cow and a pig. Mother made Swedish sausage. We had a big dinner on Christmas Eve. There was Lutefisk and flat bread and many other good things. The first presents I remember were socks and mittens which Mother had knit from her homespun yarn. In later years I remember we got small trinkets from the dime store. I can remember getting a little wooden goat, which broke shortly, and my brother got a porcelain cat which he had for many years. At 5 AM Christmas morning Pa would load us up in the sleigh and we would go to “Julotta” at church in Scandia.

But Swedeland changed as the years passed. Most of the immigrant's children born in America could speak and read Swedish but few of the grandchildren learned Swedish. Up until the 1930's the Churches would have two services, one in English and one in Swedish. But after that time the services would only be in English.

The only time the grandchildren thought about their Swedish heritage was at Christmas when dinner would include lutefisk, meatballs, rice pudding and boiled potatoes. ➔

They might receive a Christmas card from a relative in Sweden that said “God Jul” but that was about the only Swedish words they recognized. Once the immigrants left Sweden they, their children or their grandchildren almost never returned to visit the places in Sweden that the family had called home. 🇸🇪

Born and raised in the Big Lake Area outside of Minneapolis, Paul Wahlquist now lives in Los Angeles, CA.

Paul has published several local history articles and with Dick Johnson a book called *Pioneers of the Big Lake Community*.

Margareta Jacobs

Our member, Margareta A. Jacobs, Washington D.C. has passed away and left \$10,000 to the DIS Society.

I got to know Margareta in 1995, when I visited Washington D.C. on a genealogy tour. We went for a visit to the magnificent Library of Congress, and were guided through the section for local history by Margareta and a colleague of hers.

Margareta was a devout genealogist, and I am sure many of our members have been in touch with her. Last year while participating in the Swedgen workshop at the Swedish embassy in Washington, I had the opportunity to speak to her again.

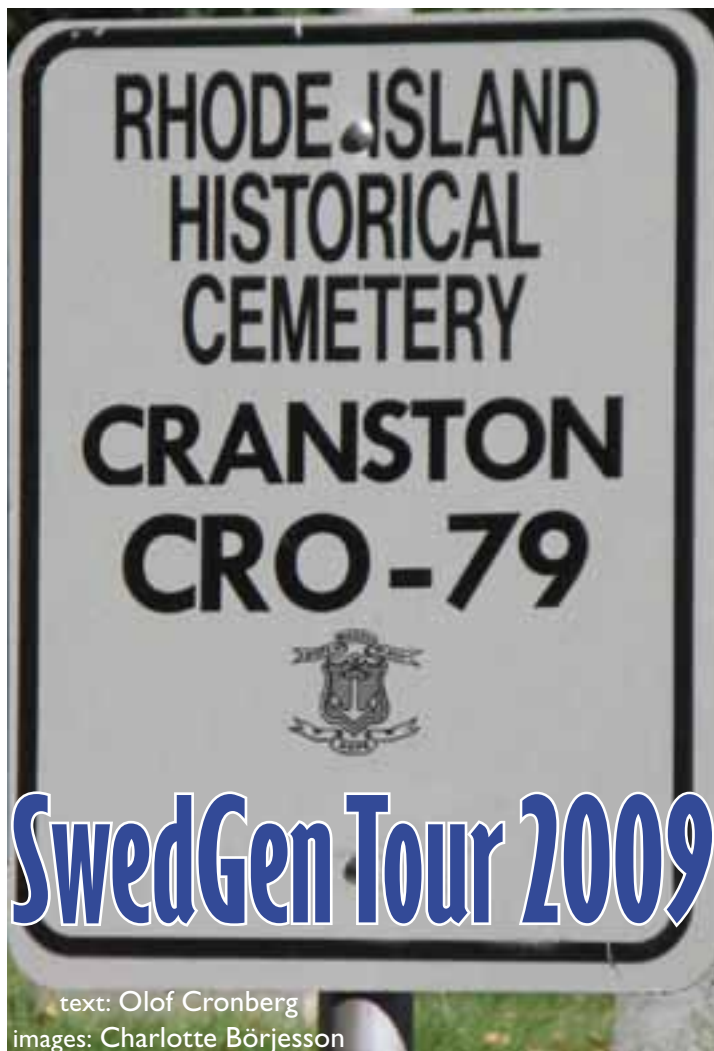
My hopes are that DIS, with this generous gift, will be able to further the Swedish-American bonds even more.

Olof Cronberg

the digital race

Update on Swedish Online Resources

	SVAR	Genline	Ancestry	ArkivDigital
Church records -1860	Örebro, Uppsala, Södermanland, Halland, Kopparberg, Västmanland, Östergötland, Kronoberg, Jönköping, Kalmar, Gävleborg, Västernorrland, Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland and Värmland's län. Skaraborg's län and Stockholm's stad in production.	Complete	Värmland's län and partly Älvsborg's län.	Complete - Blekinge, Dalarna, Gävleborg, Göteborgs och Bohus, Halland, Jönköping, Kalmar, Kronoberg, Skaraborg, Södermanland, Uppsala, Värmland, Västmanland, Älvsborg, Örebro and Östergötland's län. The rest are in progress.
Church records 1860-95	Same as above. Complete vital records (SCB extracts).	Complete vital records (SCB extracts). Complete for husförhörslängder	Same as above	Same as above
Church records 1895-1905	Partly	-	-	-
Vital records 1898-1937	Complete SCB extracts	Complete to 1920. 1920-1937 in production	-	In production
Taxation records 1642-1820	Complete	-	-	Partly
Census indexes	1860,1870 partly 1880, 1890,1900 complete 1910 in production.	-	-	-
Other records	Convicts, military records Indexes of seamen, villages and farms, ...	-	Emihamn passenger lists. US census.	Court records, probate records, military records, school records, prison records, name registers
Fee - lowest fee	50 kr (7,- USD) for 3 hours	75 kr (10,- USD) for 24 hours	Free to try, but 30,- USD for a month	135 kr (19,- USD) for a month
Fee - annual fee	995 kr (137,- USD)	1395 kr (192,- USD) (DIS Members offer)	300,- USD	1045 kr (144,- USD) (DIS Members offer)
Web site	www.svar.ra.se	www.genline.com	www.ancestry.com	www.arkivdigital.se



In October 2009, it was time for a new Swedgen Tour visiting Massachusetts, Connecticut and Minnesota. During the trip, 72 new members joined the Dis Society, which is a new record. Perhaps you that are reading this article are a new member.

During the five stops we met many genealogists. Some were young and some were old. Some started doing genealogy that very day, while others had been researching the family history for years. The visitors at the workshops were all very happy to discuss their problems with real Swedish genealogists, exchange experiences and get help with problem solving. It is great fun for us to try to be the wizards who

quickly find the solutions. Some visitors wanted help with everything, while others just wanted information about how to proceed and wanted to do the research themselves.

For each tour, it's apparent that it's getting more and more easy to find the roots in Sweden. We tried to keep track of the results, and about 90% of the problems were possible to solve.

In some cases, the information on the US side was too limited to make a solid match with Swedish data. For example, if you only know that your ancestors name was Nils Andersson and you don't know birth year or immigration year, and he died to early to be in the census 1900. In Sweden, Nils Andersson is simply a too common name. In other cases, the problem was in the 1700s when the information in Swedish records is more limited.

This year, some of the lectures were new and some were old. Charlotte Börjesson talked about CDs to get started with Swedish genealogy, such as the Emibas CD (now replaced by a web site called

Emiweb) where you can find most of the emigrants from Sweden; Swedish population 1890,1900, 1970 and 1980, where you can find those who stayed in Sweden; Swedish Death Records 1947-2003 and Buried in Sweden (info about five million tombs in Sweden).

I talked about the Disbyt database, which now has passed 21 million records and also about Dispos to easier find the records in the church books. Anneli Andersson talked about the emigration from Sweden, why they left, how they lived in Sweden, which occupations they had and so on.

The new lecture for this tour was about Historical maps, which Anna-Lena Hultman held. The National Land Surveyor Office in Sweden has digitized all historical maps, and they are available at the website of *Lantmäteriet*. The easiest way to access them, however, is to go through our Dispos pages.

On the tour, Genline was represented by Kathy Meade (from US) and Jan Eurenus (from Sweden). Kathy did a presentation of Genline and the Swedish church records on-line and Jan helped us out with the one-on-ones. When we were not lecturing, we all had one-on-ones where we during 30 minutes tried to answer questions and solve problems.

The two most common questions were how to do research in Swedish records and why did they change their name and who did it? In Sweden, family history research is easy because of good sources. We have something called household examination rolls or clerical



surveys, which only exist in Sweden and Finland. These records cover 5-10 years for each volume and contain everyone that lived in every farm and village, with information about births, migrations, marriages and deaths that occurred during this time period.

We have thus a contemporary index to the church records, and you don't lose people who move from one place to another, because that's also noted in the records. Look out for more thorough information about this in future issues of *Rooted in Sweden*.

The second question about why they changed their names, I think is interesting, because we get the same question in Sweden. Until the beginning of the 1900s in Sweden, we didn't have any special rules about adopting or changing surnames, but you could almost do as you pleased. I assume that the situation was the same in the US. Common situations when you changed your name were when you moved to a town or if you were a soldier. Often the tradition is that somebody else in higher position should have decided the new surname, and that the receiver just had to accept the name. However, I think that most

people decided themselves, which surname they wanted to use and adopted it.

The soldiers names have a special history, which is too long to describe here.

The Swedish tradition of surnames (including some soldiers names) is that the name consists of two parts where one part has a connection to the place, farm, village or parish, and the other part is just an addition. For example, my surname Cronberg could be derived from a place called something with "cron" as Landskrona or Karlskrona, and then - berg is just an addition.

Many changed their surnames after arriving in the US simply because it wasn't convenient with to many Swanson's, Nelson's and Johnson's. Many of the new names were very Swedish sounding like Bjorkstrand, Lundberg or Rehnlund. Even here I think that most people decided themselves, which name to use. I don't believe that the name changed because somebody couldn't write the name correctly when arriving in the US at Ellis Island.

During the tour, we made several stops at Swedish cemeteries. I was surprised to find that there were so many cemeteries in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. You don't hear about those states as Swedish-American states in Sweden. But Anna-Lena and Anneli knew exactly where to



The Tour Participants

go. We took a lot of photos of the tombstones with Swedish names, and Anna-Lena and Anneli will try to identify the people and also publish the photos in the future.

Another stop was the Godfrey library in Middletown, Connecticut, which I assume is one of the largest genealogical libraries in the New England area. We found some records of interest with Swedish immigrants. It was records of local funeral homes and tombs at cemeteries in the area. The library has a lot of useful information on their web site, which has been described earlier in *Rooted in Sweden*.

It was three very intensive weeks, but very fun and vitalizing. We wish to say a big thank you to all the local organizations that helped us in the US and also to the sponsors of the trip, the *Dis Society*, *Genline* and *Lantmateriet*. 🇸🇪

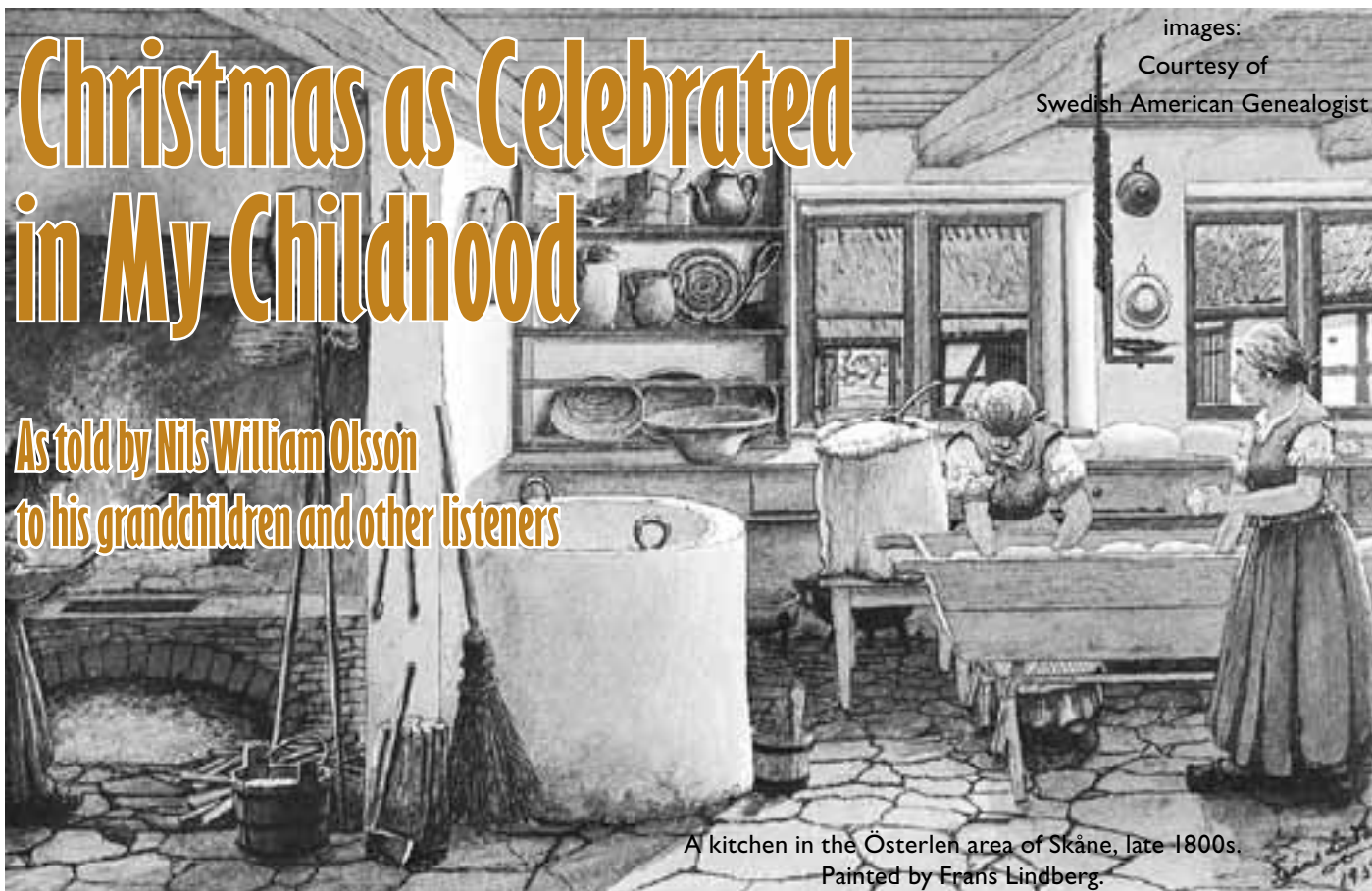


- Read all about the tour at: •
• www.swedgentour.blogg.se •
- Other websites mentioned: •
• www.emiweb.se •
• www.lantmateriet.se •
• www.genline.se •
• www.godfrey.org •

Christmas as Celebrated in My Childhood

As told by Nils William Olsson
to his grandchildren and other listeners

images:
Courtesy of
Swedish American Genealogist



A kitchen in the Österlen area of Skåne, late 1800s.
Painted by Frans Lindberg.

For this issue Rooted in Sweden has been fortunate to "borrow" an article from the quarterly journal Swedish American Genealogist (SAG). SAG was founded in 1981 by Nils William Olsson and is still being published by The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center. This article was published in 2005. Many thanks to current editor Elisabeth Thorsell who initiated this loan.

I have been asked to relate something about the celebration of Christmas of my childhood and I shall try to depict how this holiday was celebrated in my village of Killeberg in northern Skåne at the beginning of the 20th century. Bear in mind that we resided in a rural area, where there was no electricity, and where we used kerosene lamps for lighting. TV

and radio were non-existent and life as a whole was rather primitive, without indoor plumbing. We had six miles to the nearest pharmacy. If we needed a prescription filled we had to send it to Älmhult via the morning train and fetch the medicine via the afternoon south-bound express.

Preparations for Christmas began early. The first thing was to pick out a suitable Christmas tree. Since we lived near the forest, partly owned by my uncle Anthon, we had his permission to choose our tree early. About the

middle of November we purchased the Christmas delicacy *lutfisk*, which consisted of sundried cod, hard as a board. It had to be softened to be edible and was placed in a pan of water laced with lye. Every

evening my parents would exchange the water, so as to keep the water fresh. Later in November and early December mother would make preparations for Christmas food.

She baked many types of cookies and the high

point was when we siblings were all given a slice of dough to make our own *pepparkakor* and to name

"Then we all took a slice of rye bread and dipped it into a pot of boiling ham stock made from cooking the Christmas ham. As we consumed the bread we wished each other Merry Christmas."

our creations. I have forgotten what I made, but I still remember what my sister Lillie named her cookie *vovvåxling*. Mother also made a special rye bread for the holidays.

Next came the preparation of meatballs, pork and potato sausage, the fresh Christmas ham, head cheese made from a bought half pig's head and a special veal concoction called *kalvsylta*. Herring was bought and made into all types of herring delicacies, such as *ättikssill*, *kryddsill*, etc.

A specialty of Swedish Christmas was the publishing of special Christmas magazines, which came out about the first of December. All publishing companies, church groups, and many non-profit organizations had their own version of the Christmas publications, *jultidningar*, aimed at children, youth, and adults, usually filled with original Christmas stories, poems, cultural articles, puzzles, and sometimes including art reproductions which ultimately ended up festooning the outhouse. At the age of eleven I became the agent for one of these publishers and made the round of the village, taking orders, collecting money, and delivering the magazines in time



One of the Christmas magazines.

for Christmas. Needless to say I also made a little pocket money.

As the days of December sped by and we came closer to the holiday, we children began a countdown, usually five days before Christmas Eve. I should mention that at noon on Christmas Eve the holiday was ushered in by all of us gathering in the kitchen, beginning the ceremony by singing "*Fröjdas vart sinne, julen är inne*," (All rejoice, Christmas is here).

Then we all took a slice of rye bread and dipped it into a pot of boiling ham stock made from cooking the Christmas ham. As we consumed the bread we wished each other Merry Christmas. Because of this annual ritual, Christmas Eve became known as *dopparedan* (dipping day). Thus we counted the days before *dopparedan* by reciting as we arose "Today is the fifth day before dipping day," (*dan före dan före dopparedan*) counting down each day until we awoke on the morning of the magic day Christmas Eve.

After having "dipped in the pot" (*dopp i grytan*) at noon, we children became impatient with how slowly the time passed before the evening's event. In desperation mother went up into the attic and brought down the Christmas magazines of the previous year which she wisely had saved. This maneuver silenced us and restored a certain sense of tranquillity.

At six o'clock we gathered for the Christmas Eve dinner, when



A traditional Swedish Christmas Coffee table.

the goodies mother had prepared over a period of weeks made their appearance, beginning with the *smörgåsbord*, continuing with *lutfisk* served with boiled potatoes and melted butter. Then came the climax: rice porridge (*risgrynsgröt*), served with half-and-half cream, sugar, and cinnamon. Mother had hidden a blanched almond in the porridge and there was great merriment when we discovered who was the lucky finder. Finally came the last of the feasting: *klenor* or *klenätter* served with strawberry jam. These cakes were made of the same dough as doughnuts and fried in hot grease.

Then came the main event of the day, the gathering around the Christmas tree, which was lit by live candles (we did not worry about the tree catching fire since it was freshly cut and impervious to flames). Since father was in the U.S. over two Christmases, attempting to save money for our passage to the United States, it was up to mother to read the Christmas story from St. Luke. I have to admit that my attention flitted from mother's reading the Gospel to the pile of packages beckoning under the tree. The reading finally over, we opened the presents. We noted that there were two types – soft and hard – the former consisted usually of mittens, sweaters, socks, underwear, and while appreciated, they were put aside in favor of the hard packages, which contained such exciting things as books, Christmas magazines, and toys.

The Christmas of 1921 is most vividly etched in my memory. Most of December had passed and we

had not heard from father, who usually was a good correspondent. Noting mother's sad face from worrying, after the distribution of the presents, I volunteered to run down to the post office in the railroad station to check the mailbox. Mother objected, saying it was of no use, we had already picked up the day's mail. I insisted and donning my brand new pullover sweater I ran down the railroad track, breathing a prayer "Good God, let there be a letter from father." I opened box Number 76 and lo the prayer was answered. There lay a letter from father with the wellknown U.S. stamps. I literally flew home and we all rejoiced that that Christmas Eve had ended on a very joyous note. 📧

Notes

The earliest note of a Christmas tree in Sweden comes from the noble family of Wrede-Sparre at Stora Lundy in Södermanland in 1741.

According to a 1968 survey, only 49% of the participants in the survey had *lutfisk* on their table.

The person who found the almond in the rice porridge was going to get married during the next year.



A recipe for *klenätter*

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 5 egg yolks
- 4 tablespoons granulated sugar
- Grated rind from half a lemon
- 2-3 cups ordinary wheat flour

Melt the butter and let it cool. Mix egg yolks and sugar, and then mix in the other ingredients until it makes a firm cookie dough.

Let it sit in the fridge overnight. Next day roll the dough out thinly. Then cut it into slanting rectangles 10 centimeters long and three centimeters wide.

Make a slit in the middle of each piece, along the middle, and then turn the end of the cookie through the slit.

Then deep-fry a few cookies at a time until golden.



A quarterly journal devoted to Swedish American biography, genealogy, and personal history. Founded in 1981.

Subscription \$28 per calendar year.

Website:

www.augustana.edu/x13918.xml

Subscribers are invited to a genealogical workshop in Salt Lake City each October.

Nils William Olsson - a great scholar

Nils William Olsson (NWO) was born 1909 in Seattle, WA, of Swedish parents, and died in 2007 in Winter Park, Fl. His life spanned almost a century, and during that time he had a remarkable career.

When he was very young his mother died and his father brought him and his siblings back to the grandparents in Skåne, and they stayed for about 10 years in Sweden, which is why he spoke Swedish without an American accent. In the early 1920s they moved back to the U.S. after his father had remarried.

After graduation from high school he continued his education at North Park College in Chicago, and later became a teacher of Swedish at the University of Chicago. In World War II he enlisted in the navy and was assigned to the U.S. Legation in Stockholm until 1945. It is at this time that he started his career as a researcher of Swedish immigration history.

After the war he returned to the University of Chicago and obtained his Ph.D. in 1949. In 1947 he was the executive secretary of the Swedish Pioneer Centennial, which later resulted in the start of the Swedish Pioneer's Historical Society (now Swedish American Historical Society), where he wrote many articles for their Quarterly. In 1950 he joined the U.S. Information Agency and was posted to Reykjavik and Stockholm. Having joined the U.S. State department



text: Elisabeth Thorsell
image: Bengt Thorsell

Nils William Olsson
and his wife Dagmar

in 1962 he was posted to Oslo, and returned in 1966 to the U.S. and retired the following year.

In 1967 he was appointed executive director of the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a position he held for six years. In 1973 he helped organize the new Swedish Council of America, and served as its first executive secretary from 1973 until 1984.

His interest in Sweden and Scandinavia was prominent throughout his life. Probably his most outstanding accomplishment was his more than twenty years of research on Swedish immigration which resulted in his magnum opus, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York, 1820-1850*, published by the Royal Library in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1967, which was enlarged and re-published in 1995, written with the late Erik Wikén. In addition, NWO wrote numerous articles, monographs, and other academic papers, dealing mostly with Swedish immigration, personal history, and genealogy.

His proudest achievement, however, was probably his launching in 1981 of a new quarterly magazine *Swedish American Genealogist*, which is still being published by The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, based at Augustana College, Rock Island, IL. He continued to edit SAG until he retired in 1997.

NWO received numerous honors and awards throughout his life. In 1968 he was granted an honorary doctoral degree from Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden, and in 1969 he was named "Swedish-American of the Year" by the Vasa Order of America in Sweden. In 1994 he received the Victor Örnberg Memorial Prize from The Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies.

NWO was married in 1940 to Dagmar Gavert, born in the U.S. of Swedish parents, who died in 2008. They had three children, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren. 🇸🇪



text and images:
Dee Kleinow

Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

Second in line in the series of presentations of Swedish American genealogy societies is the *Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota*. Dee Kleinow of the SGSM brings us this introduction.

The goals of the Society are to assist members in their Swedish-American genealogical research by:

- 1 - promoting an awareness of our Swedish-American culture and heritage
- 2 - helping members research their ancestry with the use of our databases and online resources
- 3 - providing classes, seminars and one-on-one assistance to researchers
- 4 - providing informative programs on Swedish genealogy, immigration and history
- 5 - publishing materials (possibly translated) to aid research in Swedish genealogy where possible and practical.

The SGSM Board strongly believes having experienced speakers on subjects aimed at the Society goals will grow the organization. (See a list of recent program topics at the end of this article.)

Providing the attendees help not easily obtainable elsewhere will also do this. A warm, friendly “Team” attitude is encouraged, both within our organization and with others where a mutual benefit will result, especially in Sweden. The picture below from our recent Fall Research Conference demonstrates this teamwork where we hosted the four participants of the SwedGenTour2009: the Swedish American Genealogist Editor, Genline Sweden and Genline North America representatives.

Our growing membership shows this is working. Some in our society are members of Disbyt, etc. and have been helped that way. Many members have successfully con-

nected with living relatives and visited their ancestral homes and communities.

Membership is open to anyone interested in Swedish genealogy, without cost. However, if you wish to receive the newsletter (*Tidningen*) there is a subscription fee, which also gives you free access to the MGS Library. If you wish to attend a meeting, there is a fee to cover rent, refreshments and speaker honorariums. You only pay for what you use.

The SGSM “Gurus” are members that volunteer their time and talents to analyze, translate, and use their personal computers, databases and database subscriptions at our meetings to help you overcome your “brick walls” through one-on-one help. Some are usually available after the speakers on our regular meetings, and most are available for the entire event on our full day Research Conference



SWEDISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY of MINNESOTA





events. Please remember, they are members of SGSM like you, some very knowledgeable and some just getting started. Some have only a few resources and some have many. Most of the Swedish genealogy resource CDs, on-line databases and subscriptions are available with one or more of these Gurus.

"Some members are always ready to relax and talk about their favorite subject – genealogy..."

Additional SGSM resources include many books, and one-half (about 150 rolls of the approximately 300) Minnesota Swedish American ELCA Lutheran church records on microfilms. SGSM plans to obtain more of these microfilms as funding and availability permits.

SGSM partnered with the Minnesota Genealogical Society (MGS) to provide a Genline subscription on the computers at MGS. SGSM volunteers support the MGS Library on the third Thursday of the

month giving a Swedish genealogy researcher a very good reason to make that day and/or evening their day to be at MGS and receive help.

And last but not least, we have a database of our members and the

Swedish parishes they are researching. Lookups can be made for a member or a parish.

Our Sales table has the book *Your Swedish Roots*, various clothing items, pins, patches and our 10 year CD of the past Tidningen issues. Funds from the sale of these items and from events are used to further the goals of the Society and increase our resources.

New subscribers to the *Tidningen* are given a "Welcome Packet" containing information about SGSM (similar to this article), a brief list of resources – books, microfilms, CDs and subscriptions many of the Gurus have, directions to access the Genline subscription at MGS, etc. This helps them become aware of the resources available as quickly as possible.

Refreshments and door prizes are normally available at the meetings. Some members are always ready to relax and talk about their favorite subject – genealogy, if you do not wish to use the Swedish resources available.

Or perhaps you will go to the MGS library in the same location where other ethnic and special interest



The MGS library

groups/societies may have their resources such as the African-American, Canadian, Czech, Danish, German, Irish, Norwegian, Ostfriesen, Polish, Pommern, and Yankee.

These collections total over 28,000 books not including the map collections, newsletters, and journals. The library is over 7,200 square feet of floor space with 10 computer stations having access to Ancestry.com, Heritage Quest and Genline: WiFi: microfilm and microfiche readers: printers and copiers, and so on. 📖

Brief history of our past events

2009

- Fall Research Conference

Six different seminars was provided and six guest researchers from Sweden helped our Gurus give one-on-one help to registered attendees.

- DNA or Genetic Genealogy

Guest speaker - Dan Karvonen, professor at University of Minnesota

2008

- The Civil War and translation of the Roos diary

Guest speaker John LaVine related the story of Company D of the 3rd Minnesota Infantry composed solely of Swedes and Norwegians

- 3rd Annual research meeting

Guest speakers: Swedish Genline representatives presenting updates. Linda Coffin on "Turning Your Heirlooms into Stories"

2007

- Early US Research and DAR information

Guest speaker: Jan Jordan Lokensgard

- Sweden Before the Vikings

Guest speaker: Richard Williams, (Majors in History and Archeology), and Program Director for Dakota City Heritage Village

2006

- What is New in Technology That a Genealogist Needs to Know?

Guest speaker: Ray Kleinow, SGSM member with over 50 years of computer experience

- The Local Heritage Movement

Guest speaker: Mariann Tiblin, retired Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota

Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

The first society was organized in March of 1983 as the Swedish Genealogy Group, a branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society (MGS). In March of 1999, it adopted its own Constitution, becoming the Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (SGSM) but remain a branch of MGS. SGSM is also a member of the Swedish Council of America (SCA) and has three members that have received the SCA Award of Merit.

Meetings:

The third Saturdays of January, March, May and October in The Minnesota Genealogical Society's auditorium, MGS Library, 1185 Concord Street North, Suite 218, South St. Paul, MN 55075-1150.

Look out for schedules, upcoming events and resources at:

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mmsgsm

MGS website: www.mngs.org

Join the DIS Society!

Are you still not a member of the DIS Society?

The DIS Society is the Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden and produces this e-zine Rooted in Sweden. As a member you will also get access to the DISBYT database with over 21 million records, which covers a third of the total population who lived in Sweden before 1907. You will also get access to DISPOS, which is a tool to make it easier to find indexes to sources. It also provides a fast link to the Genline records.

We are already more than 26,500 members. You are also welcome to join the DIS Society. Annual fee: USD 18,- including e-zine Rooted in Sweden. USD 24,- including the Swedish magazine Diskulogen.

www.dis.se/english/

postscript

One of the domestic hot topics of the autumn, besides the swine flu and the forever current discussions on climate issues, is the financial crisis and eventual shut-down decision at Saab Automobile.

For many years Saab has been one of the proud Swedish exports, and I always feel a sense of pride whenever I spot a Saab or a Volvo in a big production Hollywood movie, always owned by a suburban family, never by the likes of James Bond or Batman.

Saab started as an airplane manufacturer in 1937. After WW II Saab was left with an over production of airplanes, and had to change strategy. The first car was developed, and in 1949 production of Saab 92 began. The engineers adapted their knowledge from aviation and created good aero dynamics for

the car, something very unusual at the time. During the 50s and the 60s a number of models were released, including the station wagon version, Saab 95 in 1959.

Following a dip in sales during the 60s, Saab had to modernize their cars with more modern engines. In 1969 the big lift came with the introduction of Saab 99, which stayed popular until it was remodeled in the early 80s and became the equally popular Saab 900. In 1984, SAAB 9000 was launched, and with the 1986 Cabriolet version of 900, Saab successfully entered the ever so important USA market.

In the wake of the financial crisis in the early 90s, Saab was sold to General Motors. With the new models 9-5 and 9-3 the Saab sales has fluctuated between 80 and 120,000 cars per year, never reaching the goal of 150,000. 1997, when 9-5 was launched was the last year the company declared a profit.



In the autumn of 2008, GM stated that they would try to sell Saab. The Swedish government declared that they would be unable to give financial support in order to salvage the company, and speculations surrounding possible buyers constantly arose in Swedish media throughout 2009. After a couple of potential deals fell through, GM finally took the decision to shut down on December 18.

During the shut-down process there will still be a possibility that the whole or part of the operations, or even the brand name will be sold. I think this is what every proud Swede will hope for.

Joachim Schönström

DIS Society - Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden

The DIS Society was founded in 1980 to "to investigate methods and develop computer tools to support genealogy research, and in general stimulate Swedish genealogy". DIS is an abbreviation of Datorhjälp i släktforskningen, which means Computer Aid in Genealogy. The abbreviation DIS is used in the Scandinavian countries, where there are sister societies. The DIS Society is a non-profit organization. There are seven regional DIS Societies working actively throughout Sweden and arranging meetings about several topics in Computer Genealogy. We also have a force of sixty faddrar, which are members that are experts giving support and help in the use of different genealogical softwares.

Since 1980, the DIS SOCIETY has developed a genealogical software called DISGEN, which is the leading software in Sweden. The current version is 8.1e. Currently, the software is only available in Swedish, but print-outs can be made in several languages including English. The software is easy-to-use and has a good support for source registration, producing print-outs and family books. It also has a unique possibility to link your data to a Swedish map.

Since 1989, the DISBYT database has been used to find connections and exchange data between genealogists. In 1998, the database appeared on the Internet, making it even easier to find relatives. With more than 6000 participants and over 21 million records, the DISBYT database covers half of the total population who lived in Sweden before 1909.

The DIS SOCIETY publishes a quarterly magazine called DISKULOGEN in Swedish. From 2005, we have extended our efforts to also publish a newsletter in English called ROOTED IN SWEDEN, which is published as a pdf newsletter.

At present (January, 2010), the DIS SOCIETY has more than 26,500 members. More than 600 are overseas members.

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Annual fee: USD 18,- incl Rooted in Sweden. USD 24,- incl the Swedish magazine Diskulogen.