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ROOTED IN SWEDEN



Swedish Genealogical
Society of Colorado

Denver Swedish Directory 1910



Destination Swedeland

contents

Destination Swedeland	3
The Digital Race	7
SwedGen Tour 2009	8
Denver Swedish Directory 1910	10
Swedish Genealogy Society of Colorado	11
An American in Dalsland	14
Postscript	17

firstly...

There's a definite buzz surrounding genealogy these days. The number of members in the DIS society has more than doubled the past ten years, from 10,000 to 26,000 members. And it's growing at a steady rate.

Media has also picked up on the subject. Swedish television has combined the buzz with the ongoing celebrity hype, picking up the BBC original: *Who do you think you are*. Six famous Swedes are guided through their dramatic family histories by expert researchers in six hour long programmes. The shows are very well produced and interesting, and they provide a host of tips for the novice genealogist. Knowing how time consuming research can be, and how often you lose track and wind up in dead ends, it feels a bit too easy for them, cruising in their rental cars, visiting old farm houses and local history societies, letting someone else do "the dirty work". But, still, very entertaining.



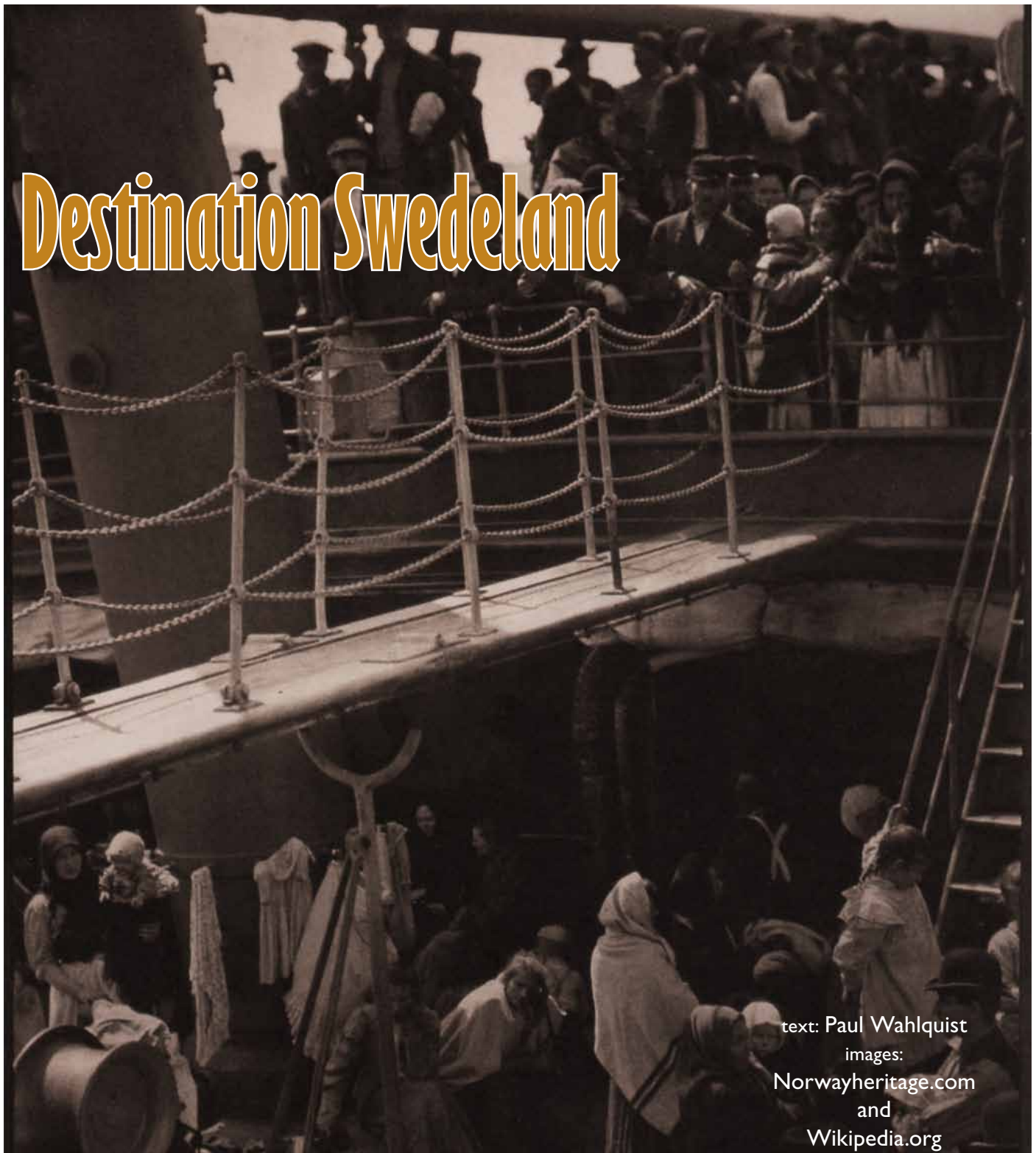
Naturally, the more available the research becomes in web based databases, the more public it becomes, and with younger participants. People I meet are in general curious of what I tell them about genealogy, and my own family research, and, believe me; I can go on for hours on end.

There's something profoundly human about wanting to know more about your origins. I think everyone at one point in their life will stop and think: who am I, and what has made me the one I am? That was the common starting-point for all the celebs in the shows. Where did I get my funny bones from? Are there any artistic genes in my family?

I think this is what's appealing about family research. People in general want explanations; they want to see the complete picture. Like actor Jeremy Irons, in the BBC original, who's English, but owns a fisherman's cottage in Cork, Ireland. He was always curious why he felt so much at home at this place on the south coast of Ireland. The show revealed that his great-great-great- grandmother had lived just a few kilometres from his cottage. Being separated by so many generations, Jeremy, in theory, probably has more in common with his neighbour. But it doesn't matter, to him it made sense, it made the picture complete. And that's what's important.

Joachim Schönström

Destination Swedeland



text: Paul Wahlquist
images:
Norwayheritage.com
and
Wikipedia.org

From 1875 to 1900 many families decided to move from the west of Sweden to America. The famines of the previous years had seen children die from starvation. Fathers were imprisoned because they stole food for their families.

The poor rural Swedes wanted land to farm which was their own. They received letters from relatives and other people telling them about the available land in Minnesota.

In 1880 there were about 65,000 Swedes living in Minnesota. People in Minnesota often referred to the area just northeast of St. Paul and Minneapolis as “Swedeland USA.” This included the counties of Chisago, Isanti, Pine

and northern Washington County. This area was named this because the population included the largest number of Swedish speaking rural people outside of Sweden.

For someone to emigrate from Dalsland to Minnesota in 1880 they started in Dalsland with a horse and wagon to carry the emigrants and their luggage to Göteborg. From Göteborg they boarded a steamship which sailed down the North Sea to the English port of Hull. In good weather the trip from Göteborg to Hull took 40 hours. From Hull they travelled by train to their ship at either the ports of Glasgow or Liverpool.

When the Transatlantic ships left Great Britain they would stop in Ireland for fuel, water, food and to pick up additional passengers. Then they began the journey to New York City or another American East Coast port. The tickets the emigrants purchased included all transportation from Sweden to Minnesota.

Most emigrants travelled Third Class also called steerage. Third Class passengers had a bunk or a cot and access to a kitchenette where they could make tea and coffee. Emigrants in Third Class brought their own bedding and utensils which consisted of a straw mattress, a pillow, blanket, tin mug, tin plate, knife, fork and tea-spoon. For hygienic purposes they would bring a wash basin, towel and marine soap. Fresh water was only available for drinking and cooking. The emigrants most likely had steamer trunks with them so the handling of luggage must have been a difficult problem.

Women and families were almost always accompanied by a man to move the luggage. When the ships returned to Great Britain the Third Class compartments were used to carry cargo as there were very few passengers needing to travel Third Class in that direction.

Many of the steamships carrying emigrants from Göteborg or Oslo to Hull were owned by the Wilson Line. Typical of these steamships was the Orlando. The Orlando, built in 1869, was 274 feet long and 32 feet wide. It had two decks and was registered as 1500 tons. It had cabins for forty two First Class passengers and thirty Second Class passengers. The Third Class passengers travelled in large compartments with bunks. The ship usually carried about two hundred Third Class passengers.

An inspector for the Marine Department, British Board of Trade on a Wilson Line gave the following information about travelling from Göteborg to Hull:

"There are three Third Class compartments fitted with open

berths in two tiers which are almost identical with the arrangements of those boats in the Atlantic trade, the berthing space of each individual being separated by a moveable board eight inches high.

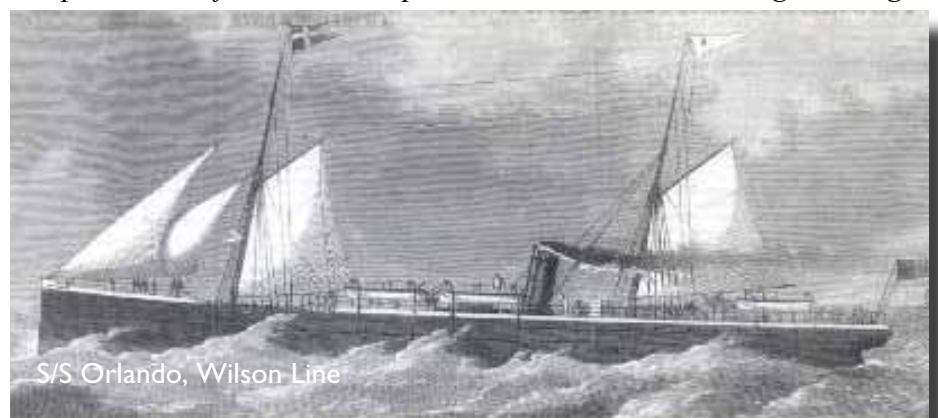
"I noticed that these Swedish emigrants had much more bedding with them than the Norwegians I saw last year..."

Each of these Compartments has wooden decks, and is well lighted and ventilated. They are

entered by ladders coming down the hatchways abreast of each other at an easy angle. One Compartment is set aside for the accommodation of single women and was fully occupied by them.

I noticed that these Swedish emigrants had much more bedding with them than the Norwegians I saw last year, and there was not the huddling together in the sleeping places such as I commented on in my previous report; I was informed that the supply of ship-bedding and tins for the use of emigrants is becoming quite an important industry at Gothenburg.

The food supplied to the emigrants was in my opinion good in quality and quantity and excellently cooked. The cooking arrange-



S/S Orlando, Wilson Line

ments of this vessel were exceptionally good and admitted of the food being issued in a cleanly and palatable state. I repeatedly tasted it and feel sure it must be superior to anything the emigrants could afford to have in their own homes. I was particularly impressed with the excellence of the soup and the free use of butter on the bread.

(This raises the question was the food always this good or was it good because the inspector was on board for this voyage.)

There is an agitation I understand going on at present in Sweden to provide life-saving arrangements for every person on board ship. The ship was in consequence hung round with life-buoys of the usual circular shape, and I was informed many more were to be provided.

In other respects the arrangements at Gothenburg were much the same as in Norway, with the exception that the police appeared to be more active in their supervision, and in addition to a considerable number on duty at the gangways, I was informed there were several detectives in plain clothes present.

I travelled from Gothenburg to Hull on these immigrant vessels and on the question of overcrowding I thought the vessels were rather crowded, but no more than the rules of the Board of Trade admitted."

The ship usually left Göteborg late Thursday and would arrive at Hull Saturday night or early Sunday morning. It would enter the Humber Dock Basin and tie up at the Steam Packet Warf.

Another inspector's report describes the landing at Hull:

"When the steamers arrive on Sunday arrangements are made for keeping the emigrants on board until the Monday morning. Notwithstanding this I am told that a good many do land on the Sunday and wander about, and some do not find their way back to the ship for the night. The fact that they have the right to remain on board, and to be fed on board for the Sunday, ought to be made known to the emigrants. When, however, the time comes for the passengers to leave the steamer, of course they have to turn out and go ashore; and it has been found on occasions, that the numbers are so great that the Liverpool agents will not allow them to be sent to the port from Hull owing to the (Transatlantic) ships at being full or nearly full."



S/S Circassia, Anchor Line

The North Eastern Railway transported the emigrants from Hull to Glasgow or Liverpool. The Railway built a special waiting room for the emigrants at their Hull Paragon Railway Station. This waiting room had facilities for the emigrants to meet their ticket agents, wash, use the toilet facilities and take shelter from the weather.

They would then board the train for their departure port.

There would be so many emigrants to transfer that the train would be up to 17 cars pulled by one steam engine. The last four cars carried baggage with the cars in front filled with passengers. The emigrant trains took precedence over all other train services because of their length. They usually left Hull on Monday morning and arrived at their destination on Tuesday.

Many ships had been built specifically for transporting emigrants to America. Typical of these ships was the S.S. Circassia owned by the Anchor Line. It was a new ship built in 1878 in Belfast, Ireland. The ship measured 400 feet long and 42 feet wide. It had one funnel, three masts rigged for sail, iron construction and a single screw. Cruising speed was 13 knots. The

passenger accommodations included First Class cabins for 200 people, Second Class cabins for 100 people and large compartments with cots for 800 Third Class passengers.

The ship sailed from Glasgow and stopped at Moville, Ireland to refuel and take on fresh food and addi-

tional passengers. The amount and quality of food was dictated by the British Board of Trade. In their advertisements the Anchor Line promised that passengers would receive the following on their trip to New York:

“so much of the best food, properly prepared as they could eat, namely: Breakfast 9 a.m.; Tea, coffee or hot chocolate, sugar, bread and butter or biscuits and butter. Dinner, 1 p.m.: Soup, beef or pork with potatoes, with plum pudding on Sundays. Supper 6 p.m. Tea, coffee, or hot chocolate, sugar, bread and butter or biscuits and butter.”

The ship usually had a Scandinavian interpreter on board. There were matrons who supervised the section occupied by the single women. The Line had a physician on board and a sick bay in each of the sections. Two special sick bays were located on the top deck for people with contagious diseases.

The cots were made of canvas and could be removed, when not in use during the day, making room for tables and chairs. The sections were each equipped with a little kitchenette where the pas-

sengers could make coffee or tea. Provisions were made to care for extremely seasick and bedridden passengers. The ship was designed with separate promenade decks for the Third Class passengers. One was forward and one astern. The amidships promenade deck was reserved for First and Second Class passengers.

The sailing time from Glasgow to New York was about 10 to 15 days. The S.S. Circassia made its last voyage in 1897 and was scrapped in 1900. By this time emigration had slowed to where there were not enough emigrants to keep the ship in service.

In the 1880’s the immigrants disembarked in New York at the processing location called Castle Garden. It was used for this purpose until the buildings at Ellis Island were completed in 1892. Castle Garden was well known as a place where criminals would try to cheat and steal from unsuspecting immigrants. Ellis Island was a much easier place to keep the criminals

from mixing with the immigrants.

The immigrants found their way to the train station and travelled west to Chicago. From there they travelled north through Wisconsin to Minnesota and Swedeland USA. When they reached St. Paul, Minnesota if it was in the early to mid 1880’s they would board the steam powered riverboat which went up the St. Croix River and

“Castle Garden was well known as a place where criminals would try to cheat and steal from unsuspecting immigrants.”

stopped at Stillwater, Marine Mills and other smaller villages. The last stop was St. Croix Falls. The immigrants would get off at one of the piers closest to where their relatives lived and hopefully be met by their relatives now located in Minnesota. By 1890 train tracks had been built to provide service to the area known as Swedeland.

The immigrants usually lived with their relatives for one or two years until they could earn money to buy land to farm and build their own home. The first priority was for the immigrant men to find work. The Swedes had worked in the forests of Sweden as lumbermen. The lumbering of the St. Croix River area was a very large industry employing hundreds of men. The industry started in 1840 and the last log to be sawed in the mills floated down the St. Croix River in 1914.

James Taylor Dunn, historian of the St. Croix River, states that from 1840 to 1903 the St. Croix valley produced enough lumber to build 75,000 houses. In 1879 the trees harvested averaged 55 meters in



height. In the year 1890 three and a half million logs floated down the St. Croix River to be cut into lumber at the sawmills. Plenty of jobs became available each winter and Swedish immigrants already skilled as lumbermen found work to earn money.

The immigrants used the money they earned working in the lumber camps to buy land for their farms and lumber to build a house and barns. They first would build a log cabin, log barns, buy horses, cows,

pigs and chickens. Then when they earned more money they would build houses and barns from lumber. Immigrants who in Sweden had only been able to rent a “torp” or had lived in the barn now became owners of very large farms in Swedeland USA. 🌲

Paul Wahlquist has lived in Los Angeles, CA, for 40 years, but he was born and raised in the Big Lake Area outside of Minneapolis. This is the place that he still calls home.

His grandparents were early pioneers, arriving in Big Lake in 1881.

Paul has written his family history, and several local history articles. He has also co-authored a book called *Pioneers of the Big Lake Community*.

the digital race

Update on Swedish Online Resources

	SVAR	Genline	Ancestry	ArkivDigital
Church records -1860	Västerbotten's län. Partly Värmland's and Jämtlands län.	Complete	Värmland's län and partly Älvsborg's län.	Every län partly, except for Gotland's, Gävleborg's, Jämtland's, Stockholm's, Västerbotten's and Västernorrland's län.
Church records 1860-95	Complete	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	In production	-	Same as above
Taxation records 1642-1820	Complete	-	-	Partly
Census indexes	Partly (1860,1870,) 1880 Complete 1890,1900	-	-	-
Other records	Convicts, military records Indexes of seamen, vil-lages and farms, ...	-	Emihamn passenger lists	Court records, probate records, military records, school records, prison records, name registers
Fee - lowest fee	50 kr (6,- USD) for 3 hours	75 kr (10,- USD) for 24 hours	Free to try, but 30,- USD for a month	135 kr (18,- USD) for a month
Fee - annual fee	995 kr (135,- USD)	1495 kr (195,- USD) (DIS Members offer)	300,- USD	1045 kr (140,- USD) (DIS Members offer)
Web site	www.svar.ra.se	www.genline.com	www.ancestry.com	www.arkivdigital.se

SwedGen Road Tour 2009



Have you hit a brick wall in your Swedish research or don't know where to begin?

A group of Swedish genealogists will be touring the United States this autumn to teach and assist Swedish-Americans in how to find their roots and how to do Swedish research.

A group of four Swedish genealogists are touring the United States for the sole purpose of helping Swedish-Americans learn more about their heritage. These four individuals participated in previous SwedGen tours and have decided to continue the tradition with the new SWEDGEN 2009.

On previous trips, the group has been successful in helping many individuals getting started with their research as well as breaking down many brick walls.

This year the group will make the following stops:

- Saturday, October 3,
– Worcester, Massachusetts
- Wednesday, October 7,
– Berlin, Connecticut
- Thursday, October 15,
– Cambridge, Minnesota
- October 16-17,
– St. Paul, Minnesota

The group will lead a Swedish genealogy research day that will include presentations and demon-

strations on how to use the various resources for Swedish genealogical and historical research. There will be presentations on Swedish genealogical online resources, Swedish genealogical CDs and Swedish emigration. New this year will be a presentation about historical local maps available online at Lantmäteriet.

The tour participants will assist individuals with their personal research. The group will have access to Swedish online and CD genealogical resources, including



resources specific to regional areas such as Kalmar, Kronoberg, Jönköping, Halland, Jämtland and Stockholm. In addition the group will have access to the Dalsland project (70,000 names from Dalsland including emigrants), index of names for the Swedish American churches and additional names of emigrants not yet included in the Emibas CD.

The Swedish tour participants will be Anneli Andersson, Anna-Lena Hultman, Charlotte Börjesson and Olof Cronberg. Kathy Meade, the U.S. representative for Genline, will also be accompanying the group.

Anneli Andersson has been doing genealogical research since 1988, and has worked at the Mellerud museum and genealogy archive for over 17 years. At the archive, she assists visitors with their research, and has taught classes in genealogy. Anneli is experienced in helping North Americans to find their Swedish roots, and has assisted them in locating where their ancestors lived and where they are buried. Anneli was a participant in SwedGen 2002, 2007 and 2008.

Charlotte Börjesson has been doing genealogical research for more than 20 years and has deep experience with both Swedish and American resources. She is affiliated with the Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden (DIS) and her areas of expertise include research within western Sweden as well as computer genealogical research and photography. Charlotte was a participant in SwedGen 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008.

Olof Cronberg is affiliated with the Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden (DIS) and is the former editor of DIS's newsletter, *Rooted in Sweden*. He has since more than 30 years extensive experience working with both Swedish and American genealogical resources. He has a very strong understanding of the genealogical database, Disbyt. Olof was a participant in SwedGen 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008.

Anna-Lena Hultman has been doing genealogical research for more than 20 years and is well-known as an expert on emigration research and Västergötland. She was one of the key persons in the development of the Emibas CD, a CD with information on more than 1.1 million emigrants leaving Sweden between 1845 and 1930. She also guides many North Americans during the summer months in locating their ancestor's homestead in Västergötland. Anna-Lena was a tour participant in SwedGen 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008.

The SWEDGEN 2009 Research Day will be a great opportunity to get help with your Swedish genealogical research.

Suggested Presentations:
Introduction
How to Find Ancestors from Sweden – Available CD Resources
Facts About Emigration
Swedish Genealogical Societies Online



Other Swedish Archival Resources Online

Swedish Church Records Online
Farms and Villages (If possible)

Assuming that 3 people are available to help at all times from 10:30 to 4:30, there can be 6 individual sessions per hour or 36 individual consultations.

More information about the workshops and the lectures will be available at:

www.dis.se/swedgentour/2009

There will also be information about how to sign up for one-on-one sessions. 📍



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Denver Swedish Directory 1910

Swanson, Frank W., Arbetare, Oliners Livery, 1135 Inca St.
Swanson, Frank, Elektriker, Arb., 1085 W. Colfax St.
Swanson, Geo., Utskänkningsbiträde, 509 15th St.
Swanson, Gust., Arbetare, 4170 Eaton St.
Swanson, Gustave T., Arbetare, 123 Walnut St.
bostad 2226 Court Pl.

Swanson, Fröken Gertrude, 2728 Arapahoe St.
Swanson, Gus., Arbetare, 2826 Larimer St.
Swanson, Gus., Utskänkningsbiträde, 509 15th St.
Swanson, Gust., Arbetare, 4170 Eaton St.
Swanson, Gustave T., Arbetare, 123 Walnut St.

text: Joachim Schönström
images: from the CD

Family research wouldn't be as convenient and exciting if it weren't for all those databases and CDs available to us by the work of members of non-profit associations. One of those CDs is Swedish Directory of Denver, Colorado 1910 which has been produced by Denver based society SGSC.

The directory consists of advertisements and the names and addresses of about 6,500 Denver inhabitants with Swedish origin. According to the publisher, these names merely represent the heads of families, which means that the total Swedish population would be about 15,000, quite a substantial community in a city of about 200,000.

The text on the scanned images is interpreted by OCR, so you can search for specific words and

names. The CD also includes an English translation of all the occupations mentioned in the directory, and of a foreword probably written by the publisher: Adolf E Bundsen.

99 years after it was written, the foreword makes very interesting reading. It's a fervent speech, urging Swedes to come together, and unite in the Swedish "colony", by supporting the Swedish businessmen and industries in the city of Denver.

It's also fascinating to learn that the well known Swedish envy was already deeply rooted in 1910. According to the writer this is a threat to their own self-preservation and economic interests, and "ought to be shoved out the door". 🇸🇪



The CD can be bought from Swedish Genealogical Society of Colorado.

Contact Kate Johnsson:
kate@idcomm.com

Price: \$15 plus postage.

SGSC website:
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cosgs/



The picture above was taken "on demand" on June 6, 2009, on the Swedish National Holiday, outside the conference room at Denver Public Library where Swedish Genealogical Society of Colorado (SGSC) had a meeting that day. Kate Johnson, President of SGSC is the fourth person from the right. Kjell S Andersson is number eight from the right.

SGSC is first out of what will hopefully become a series of presentations of Swedish-American genealogical societies. Are you keen on presenting your society? Send an e-mail to editor@dis.se.



(SGSC) was founded in April 2007, by a number of enthusiasts with a burning interest for genealogy in general, and, more importantly, for research on Swedish ancestry in particular.

The purpose of the SGSC is to assist members in their genealogical research by:

- Encouraging the pursuit and preservation of Swedish-American family research;
- Collecting, sharing, and disseminating knowledge related to Swedish genealogy;
- Sponsoring events related to Swedish genealogical research resources, methodologies, and culture;
- Publishing materials to aid in the research of Swedish ancestry as they relate to immigrants and their descendants living in the State of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region;

- Collaborating with other genealogical and cultural organizations for the benefit of ourselves and the general public.

The society already has some 80 members, all with Swedish family connections. We meet on a Saturday morning each month in Denver Public Library on 14th Street and Broadway, downtown Denver. All interested family historians are welcome to take part, and we of course welcome new members. Some of us speak and write Swedish, and can help with translations of both Swedish church records and private letters. But we would like to have more Swedish speaking members.

The genealogy experience varies from zero to 30 years. Myself, I've had genealogy as a hobby since 1975. I joined the society in February last year. Since May last year, I function as a "coach", which means that I explain how you go about exploring and inter-

preting old Swedish parish registers.

At our meetings, we've had lectures on very different topics. It has often been about finding your ancestors by using various computer programs and databases, like Genline, Ancestry.com, and SVAR, and Swedish censuses on CD, among other things.

We've also had the privilege of hosting special guest speakers on particular themes. The themes for our monthly meetings this year has been, for example:

- *Family in a shoe box – introduction to postcards for genealogists.* Speaker Dede Horan shared her extensive knowledge of postcard history, and demonstrated how you can use postcards to illuminate your family's legacy and learn more about local history.
- *Swedish emigration lecture.* Recognized speaker, Erik Gustavsson, director of the Swedish American Center of Karlstad, Sweden presented a lecture on Swedish emigration.
- *Restoring Family Photographs.* Paul Ternlund, SGSC member and active member of Denver digital photo club, demonstrates the restorative capabilities of Adobe Photoshop, presenting "before and after" views of family photos.

Saturday, October 4, 2008 was an important date for SGSC. After planning and preparing during the Spring of 2008, SGSC, in cooperation with Community College



of Aurora and SWEA (Swedish Women's Educational Association), arranged and hosted Swedish Family Research Fair, a genealogy conference with international traces. Some 50 aspiring and already devoted genealogists participated.

In the conference invitation, we offered early registers the service of helping out with tricky research problems, and a private session with our "experts", discussing solutions to the problem. We received 16 requests, some of which were rather complex, and we soon realized that we wouldn't be able to solve these problems "on demand"

at the conference, without doing extensive analyses beforehand. Instead, we produced 13 reports,

with translations and results of the research. In total 186 pages were handed over to the participants on their arrival in the morning.

During the day, a number of lectures were given by guest speakers and by me. The first guest speakers of the day were Kathy Meade, sales manager for Genline in USA and Canada. With her was the Swedish sales manager, Jan Eurenius. Together they described the



services provided by Genline, and were also available for questions during the day of the conference. ➔

Jay Devaughn, Director of Library Services, Community College of Aurora, spoke about accessing international data bases via different online catalogues.

After the lunch break it was my turn. Based on two real case studies, I had prepared a step by step description of how to find your Swedish ancestors. I also provided the listeners with hints on finding alternate routes and revealing misspellings by priests.

The last lecture was given by Lenora Lynam from McPherson County Old Mill Museum & Research Archives, Lindsborg, Kansas. She spoke about finding information on soldier ancestors. She turned out to be very knowledgeable on Swedish military history and military archives.

In an exhibition room, next to the auditorium a number of organisations were gathered, presenting their activities. Those present were:

SWEA (Ansi McHugh)
Genline (Kathy Meade, Jan Eurenienius)
Svenska Skolan (Anna Rivero)
McPherson County Old Mill Museum, Lindsborg, Kansas (Lenora Lynam, Lorna Nelson)
Swedish Historical Society of Colorado (Roland Nilsson)
Olsongraphics Keepsake Family Trees (Becky Olson)
Swedish Club (Roland Nilsson)
Swedish Genealogical Society of

Colorado (Kate Johnson, Claire Schaeffer, Maryanne Patterson)

We in the SGSC were very happy with the big interest shown during the day, and the conference was a complete success.

This October, the SGSC will arrange an outing to Lindsborg, Kansas, to participate in the Swedish festival there. We're expecting that 20-30 people will go on the bus trip. 🇸🇪

Kjell S Andersson was born in Värmland but grew up in Vaxholm, north of Stockholm. He lived for 30 years in Täby, outside Stockholm. He became a member of DIS as soon as it had started. His membership number is 5.

He moved to Colorado Springs, in January 1997. At that time he had worked for Ericsson in Kista for 16 years and since 1992 as the Head of Business Unit GSM

infrastructure with 20,000 employees in 60 countries. In Colorado Springs he worked as CEO of Omnipoint Technologies Inc. until his retirement in 2000.

Kjell's own research is nowadays focused on finding as many descendants as possible of his oldest ancestor: Påvel Olofsson Suhoinen. He was born in 1594 in Finland, but settled in Lövåsen, Sunne, Värmland. Among the descendants are many famous people, such as Tage Erlander, Buzz Aldrin and Sven-Göran Eriksson.

His database just recently crossed the 15,000 mark. He has distant relatives all over the United States. One Saturday a month he's available for free genealogy assistance during a whole day at Fika coffee house in Parker, south of Denver. It can be about "jumping the pond", finding the place from where the ancestors emigrated, and tracing backwards in time and interpreting and translating Swedish church records.

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 12 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/

The bell tower
at Ör church

An American in Dalmland

text and images:
Paul Wahlquist



Next stop on our geographical tour of Sweden is Dalsland. Because of the extensive emigration of the 1880's and 90's, this is where many Americans of today have their ancestral roots. One of these is Paul Wahlquist, who visited Dalsland some years ago.

On my first visit to Dalsland, some years ago, my first thoughts were to find the places where my ancestors had lived. I had already researched the Swedish Church records so I knew the parishes I wanted to visit. I even had the farm names for some ancestors. Finding the farms required detailed maps. Fortunately the Dalsland Museum in Mellerud sells excellent parish maps from the late 19th Century that show the farm names.

With the maps on the car seat along side of me, I drove to the parishes of Mo, Rännelanda, Högsäter and Fär-gelanda. I found the ruins of buildings where my ancestors lived before they emigrated to Minnesota. In Mo my ancestors had worked at the Forsbacka iron-

”When you visit the Castle ruins and look at the beautiful view of the lake you understand why they selected this location.”

works. I drove south from the Mo Church hoping to find some ruins of the old buildings. To my surprise I found the old ironworks was now the clubhouse and buildings for the Forsbacka Championship Golf Course. The Dalsland visitors can have some very surprising experiences when exploring the land of their ancestors.

But visiting Dalsland should be more than just trying to find one's family history. To start with the churches are very beautiful and often open for visitors. The church most often listed in travel books is the one at Skållerud. It is old and very ornate, definitely a must see. Also the paintings on the

favorite is on the point where you find the remains of the Dalaborg Medieval Castle. It was built in 1304 by King Birger's two brothers Erik and Waldemar. When you visit the Castle ruins and look at the beautiful view of the lake you understand why they selected this location. The castle burnt down during civil unrest in 1434 and was never rebuilt. You will find the ruins on the lake shore just east of Grinstad.

My ancestors left Rännelanda in 1881. When they emigrated many families lived in the parish. Most of the farming was done with horses and needed many people using hand



pewes of the Mo church are very attractive. I found it different that the bell towers for many of the old churches are separate buildings. Some of the bell towers which I have found very interesting are the towers for the churches at Ör and Järn.

Lake Vänern forms the eastern boundary of Dalsland. It is the largest inland lake in Europe. There are many places to view the lake, but my

tools to plant, cultivate and harvest the crops. Now one tractor can do the work of many people. The women milked the cows, made butter and cheese. Now farmers have milking machines and trucks come to pick up the milk and take it to a dairy for processing. Men went into the forests with hand saws and axes to cut trees that would be used for lumber or to make charcoal. Now the lumberman uses a gasoline powered saw that can cut down a tree in a few minutes. I think to myself, would there have been any way for my ancestors to make a living if they had stayed in Rännelanda?



In the mid Eighteenth Century families from Dalsland emigrated to many different parts of the United States and Canada. They wrote back about the places where they had settled. But after driving around Dalsland. I can see why the letters sent by the immigrants who had settled in Minnesota along the upper St. Croix River Valley attracted so many of the people of Dalsland. This area is so similar to where I grew up.

The people of Dalsland that moved to the upper St. Croix River Valley did not need to learn how to live in a new country. The climate was almost identical. They found many of the trees, plants and wild animals were just like they had seen all their lives. But best of all there was plenty of work for the men during the winter in the forests along the St. Croix River Valley and there was plenty of available land to buy for a farm. Probably the biggest difference was that there

were not so many big rocks in Minnesota so it was much easier to clear the land for their farms.

It also was easy because there were so many people from Sweden already living there. The ancestors of the families where I grew up had emigrated from Ör, Erikstad, Grinstad, Rännelanda, Bolstad, Dalskog, Sundals-Ryr and other parishes in Dalsland. Most adults could speak some Swedish.

Now the beauty of Dalsland is that it has not changed that much from what it was like when my ancestors left in 1881. At that time Minnesota looked like Dalsland. Now Dalsland looks like Minnesota did when my ancestors arrived there. Dalsland has the unspoiled look of forests and family farms. No large developments with hundreds of houses. No large industrial areas polluting the air. Just somewhere to remind one that not all places have become 21st Century crowded cities. 🌳

Facts about Dalsland

Often called "a Sweden in miniature", with its lakes, plains, and even a "fjäll". The terrain consists of 1/4 agricultural lands and 2/3 forested lands.

The Dalsland canal was completed in 1868 and has 28 locks in its length of 254 km.

Population: 51,330

Area: 3,708 sq km

Biggest town:
Åmål, 9,400 inhabitants

Highest mountain:
Baljåsen, 308 metres

Largest lake: Vänern

Dalsland tourism:
www.dalsland.com



in short...

Arkiv Digital - English news

DIS has a deal with Arkiv Digital. As a member you can buy a one year subscription for 1045 SEK.

They've also introduced latest news in English. The rest of the website is still only in Swedish, though.

www.arkivdigital.se/englishnews

Obituaries on the Internet

Obituarieshelp.org is an online resource for obituaries and genealogy search in America. Search by state and you will find a great number of newspapers included in the database.



Ancestors buried in Stockholm?

Now you can search among 525,000 people buried in Stockholm.

The website is translated into English.

www.hittagraven.stockholm.se



postscript

A while ago I watched the American film *Miracle*. It's about the heroic achievement of USA's Olympic ice hockey team in Lake Placid in 1980. They beat the Soviets in a historic semi final and went on to win the gold medals. As I understand, this happened at a time when the American economy was at a low, unemployment was high and a general state of discontent was growing across the country. At the same time relations with the Soviet Union were as chilly as ever in the cold war, after the Soviet entry into Afghanistan. All this made these young Americans' victory so immensely important to the morale of a whole nation. The Soviets would have beaten USA on nine times out of ten, but on the day when it really mattered, USA won and it gave the country a much needed boost.

Like many other nations across the globe, Sweden is now in a state of

recession, and cut-backs are being made all over, in public as well as private organizations. The currency is at an all time low, which means that many Swedes will choose a domestic summer holiday. There's nothing wrong with that, but still... We are in dire need of a boost of morale, self confidence and belief in the future. And what symbolizes the belief in the future better than a wedding? And what unites a nation more than a royal wedding?

So, the announcement of the engagement between crown princess Victoria and her future husband Daniel Westling could not have come at a better time. The wedding will be next year, and until then it will generate an industry of its own and provide a lar-



ge number of job opportunities. The tabloid newspapers have already started to cash in on the wedding to be, publishing "save it and keep for the future-issues" on the Engagement. The craze will peak next year. We will turn frantically royal for a while, the nation will be flooded by yellow and blue flags, and it will do us good. Look out for news about it. Maybe the happy tidings will spread across the Atlantic. Let's hope so, it would do wonders for our self-esteem.

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 20 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 (April 2007), the DIS SOCIETY has more than 26,500 members. More than 600 are overseas members.
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