

Swedish Roots In Oregon

An Immigration Research Project

June 2009 Newsletter

Editor: Leif Rosqvist

Volume 19

Message from the President, Barry Peterson

So, the tomatoes are planted, even the one that is upside down. I am a trendsetter with my tomatoes this year. The major question, of course, is will I see any red ones this fall? They were mostly green last year. It was a poor harvest.

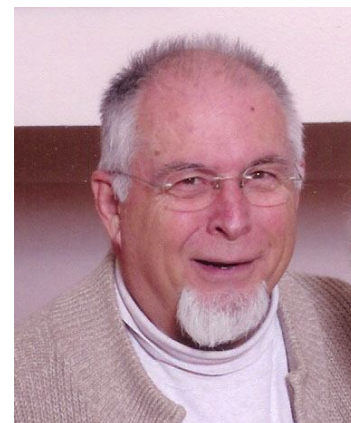
Does having the garden indicate that we can now prepare for midsummer and all the good times it connotes? I sure hope so as I eagerly look forward to the parties and the good food and spirits that come with it. I recall the little kids walking, almost running, hand in hand along a trail to the site of the local midsummer event in Råssö, Bohuslän, and then the dancing to the old fiddlers, sharing meals and parties on into the night at the family stuga. What a great event midsummer is each year and how much fun it is to look back upon those events, whether you have attended one or thirty. It is a truly festive time in all of Sweden and is imitated in many parts of the North America.

In mid-May, Laurel and I spent a short visit in Skåne, driving thru the countryside to Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik and tiny Vitemölla and then back to Bjärred to visit friends. The fields of raps (canola) were in full bloom giving the countryside a special golden glow and assuring us spring had arrived. Those fields gave us assurance that the less glamorous fields of wheat, barley and oats would also be doing well. It was Saturday in Ystad and we watched as a military band marched along the walking street as we found a bakery and coffee. Those of you who read the Henning Mankell books about Inspector Kurt Wallender know this area well, even if you have not visited it.

SRIO has had a very good year with the publication and distribution of ***Swedish Oregon***. The local community gave us the support we needed to get the book off to the publishers and we got three major grants, as well, to cover the costs of production. The book continues to sell well as we continue to promote sales here and even in Sweden where Lars Nordström has made a series of lectures and book-signing parties. He will be back in Sweden this summer to continue making our presence known and to encourage the Swedes to read our book.

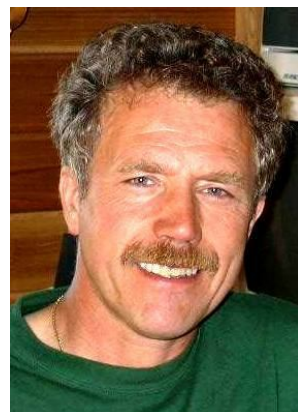
SRIO is also adding significant material to its website. The web pages are getting more and more usage as we add this material. We encourage your suggestion as to materials to include on those web pages. Let us know what you think should be included.

We wish you a pleasant and productive summer and fall and hope you can take advantage of the cultural opportunities in the greater Portland community. Our members look forward to continuing to serve you with historical information on the Swedes who came to Oregon and their lives within the community. We hope to see many of you at the upcoming events, such as the annual crayfish party and Lucia.



Lars Nordström takes *Swedish Oregon* to Sweden

In March 2009 SRIO Publications Editor Lars Nordström took *Swedish Oregon* on a two week book tour in Sweden. On the flight over, he brought along a box containing 36 books. After a poorly attended Stockholm release party “lesson to be learned” never try to have a release party in a big city on a Saturday night that also happens to coincide with the Annual Swedish Melody Festival Contest “on television”, things improved considerably. Three bookstores bought copies to sell: St. Pauls bok- och pappershandel and Sweden Bookshop (both in Stockholm), and Uppsala English Bookshop in Uppsala.



During his trip, Lars visited Uppsala University and gave a presentation at Centrum för multietnisk forskning. He then continued to Finnkulturcentrum in Torsby, a small town located in northern Värmland. From there he traveled south to Göteborg, to give a talk at the headquarters of the organization Riksföreningen Sverigekontakt, whose mission it is to support the preservation of Swedish culture, history and language abroad. From the Swedish west coast he traveled to the east coast, to the beautiful old city of Kalmar. He spent an entire afternoon with Kalmar Genealogiska Förening, who had gathered for a day at a nearby school. The last leg of his trip took him to Växjö and the venerable House of Emigrants, where he made his final presentation. At each institution he donated a copy of *Swedish Oregon* to the library, and when he returned to Stockholm, he found that he had only one copy left. Which was promptly bought by one of his friends! It looks like another box of books will have to fly across the Atlantic soon. The people in Sweden admired *Swedish Oregon*, but there was one thing that they would have liked to have seen improved: the language. It was not in Swedish! Many people read English well enough, but they would have preferred it in their native language. Well, who knows, maybe one day we will find a Swedish publisher willing to give *Swedish Oregon* a chance!

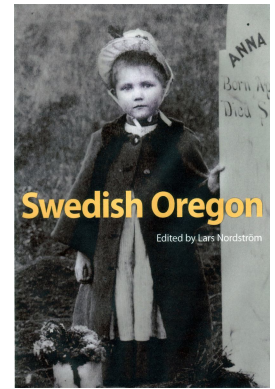
Need a speaker on Swedish History in Oregon?

Current Vice President, Lars Nordström, is available to speak to groups interested in the Swedish settlement of Oregon and of contemporary issues of Swedish-American interest. He travels frequently to Sweden and will be giving a series of talks there in the spring of 2009. You can reach Lars at his website, www.larsnordstrom.com, or at our SRIO website, www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org.

Swedish Oregon

by Lars Nordström

About seven months have now passed since *Swedish Oregon* was released to an enthusiastic crowd in Portland in late October 2008. Since this was the first book ever published on the history of the Swedes in the state of Oregon in English, many were eager to see it in print. As proof of the great enthusiasm of the Swedish-American community in Oregon, about 300 copies had been pre-sold as part of a fundraising effort, and SRIO members were busy during the following weeks distributing books far and near. Since its release, an additional 400 copies have been sold. Considering the fact that SRIO does not have a distributor working on promoting it to the bookstores (for the simple reason that there is no small press book distributor left in Oregon), and that very few bookstores carry it, we consider more than 700 copies sold a tremendous success. More than 95% of the books have been sold either through the SRIO website, Oregon English Journal, or at SRIO participation at public events such as ScanFair, and at presentations made by Lars Nordström around the Northwest as well as in Sweden. Thank you all for your great support!



Swedish Oregon has so far been reviewed in *The Oregonian*, *Nordstjernen*, *The Oregon Historian* and the *SHF Newsletter*. More reviews are on the way. It is such an inspiration to us that all reviewers so far have found it a wonderful book. No one has had a bad word to say about it, and we are especially happy to see that so many public libraries around the state have ordered copies. When the entire edition has been sold out, I think we can feel assured that the Swedish history in the state of Oregon will never be forgotten.

SRIO Website

by Lars Nordström

During its five years of existence, the SRIO website has grown substantially, and so has traffic. During the last six months, an average of 40 to 100 people a day have found their way to our website! They read about the history of the organization; they read in the archive of Newsletters; they peruse information about our booklets as well as our recent book, *Swedish Oregon*, but most of all, they study Ernst Skarstedt's immigrant biographies from his 1911 book *Oregon och dess svenska befolkning*. It was in 2008 that Swedish Roots in Oregon completed the translation of those 98 immigrant stories, and obviously it was a project well worth the effort. Eventually, as time permits, we will also add the historical photographs associated with those biographies.

Our webmaster Herje Wikegård is currently involved in moving the website over to a new and improved software program, and once that has been completed, SRIO will start adding a few new sections to the website. We would also like to make the website more interactive, making it place where you, the visitor, can enter into a dialogue with us. Perhaps you have something to share with us. Perhaps there is something you would like to ask. Please let us know what you would like to see. Välkomna!

When I Emigrated to America

A Life Story about Per Johan Anderson

The beginning...

This story of Per Johan and Hulda Anderson and the journey that forever changed their lives, and mine. I'm Carl Nelson, a great grandson born and raised in Portland, Oregon. I'm still not exactly sure what sets the Swedish-American apart from regular main-stream American, but I had an experience that made that part of me much more real.

In 2004, I had the privilege of traveling to Sweden and visiting my Great Grandparent's ancestral homes. In doing that I visited Styrshult farm that was the boyhood home of Per Johan. Styrshult resembles very much the farm they created when they came to America. It is in a quite rural setting, lying just across from a small creek from the old churchyard. With only a little imagination, I could hear the church bell pealing across the pastoral Swedish countryside and see young Per Johan walking with his mother, Sara Elisabeth, through the fields, across the creek and into the church. To the end, Per Johan (Morfar to us kids) and Hulda (Mormor to us kids) held closely their religious beliefs.



The old churchyard

I was never privileged to know Per Johan, but I know that the family speaks of him with great respect; and as a family, they were revered in their community. Their daughter Sara was my maternal grand mother. She was a kind of industrious role model for us ten grandchildren.



Styrshult, Ljunghem

Theirs was a story of stepping out into a vastly uncertain future, working from dawn to dusk, holding family tightly and, piece by piece, shaping a life to be admired. We who follow owe them very much.

From the household examines (husförhörslängd) for 1861-68, we know that Anders and Sara Peterson moved to the farm at Styrshult, Ljunghem from Warola (later Varola, now Värås) in 1865. Peterson bought a 3/16 mantal, e.g. 3/16 portion of the complete original farm, situated across the creek from Ljunghem's churchyard, which he farmed. He seemed to move from surrounding parish to parish, which could mean that he was getting more responsible positions at mills. He also most likely worked a mill on the farm.



Anders and Sara
ca 1865

The couple had 13 children (10 sons, and 3 daughters) a common number of children at this time in Sweden. Per Johan was born July 25, 1855 and he was the second son Anders and Sara, with the consequence that the farm would go to the older brother the day the parents are gone. The rest of the children needed to find another way to earn their living.

The Promised Land

This was a critical period in Swedish history when a very slow change from pure agricultural to pre-industrial society was making it very difficult for non-farming families to earn their living.



Per Johan
ca 1870

At the time Swedes heard about a country far away, called the Promised Land, where anybody with courage and determination could make a dream come true. This was the period of "America Fever" with hot promises of ample land through the Homestead Act, providing cheap or free land if the settlers would clear at least some acres and put them into production and thus work for the common man.

Going West...

From the household examines for 1876-83, we also know that Per Johan emigrated to America on April 6, 1882. Per Johan was not a Pettersson but was listed as Andersson and later Anderson, due to the Swedish system of patronymics as he was the son of Anders (Anderson).

He most likely departed to America through Gothenburg via Liverpool, England, and landed in New York for further travel to his final destination Lohrville, Iowa. Very little is documented from this journey as this was for many emigrants a very difficult, cramped, unclean and tiresome journey in the late 1800..

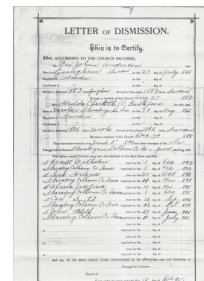


Gothenburg 1870

To the Midwest...

After arriving in Lohrville, Iowa, 1882, he worked in farming activities for 15 years. During his stay there he met his future wife Hulda Larson, daughter of Gustav Larson, a miller in the Svenstorp area between Skövde and Warola, indicating that they lived within seven miles of each other in Sweden. Hulda arrived in America in 1886.

Per Johan and Hulda were married on June 8, 1890. and were members of Skaraborg Lutheran Church of Calhoun, Iowa. From the "letter of dismissal" we know he became a member the church on August 27, 1882. She became member of the Church on December, 29, 1889. They had five children during the period 1892-1901(Ernst, Sara, Alma, Carl, John), all of them baptized at the Church.



Letter of dismissal



Wedding 1890

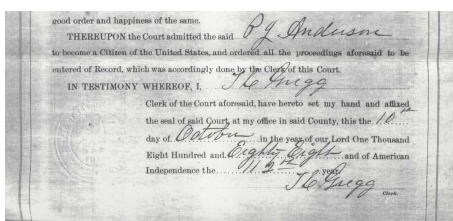
"Be it remembered. That at a term of the District Court holden in and for said County in the Court House therein on the 10th day of October in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty Eight, when P.J. Anderson, a native of Sweden to be admitted to become a Citizen Of The United States".



The Anderson children



Church in Calhoun



This is the magic moment that all immigrants are waiting for, and so did Per Johan Anderson.

To the West Coast...

Per Johan had an uncle who worked as a logger for the Benson Timber Co. in Oregon, which was logging in the Clatskanie area, and he moved the family to Longview, WA, at the behest of his uncle. His uncle had land in Longview and he sold Per Johan and his brother August some acreage.

Per Johan and Hulda built a farm along Cameron Creek in Longview, WA, where they earned their living though logging, first in Clatskanie, OR and later around Longview, WA.

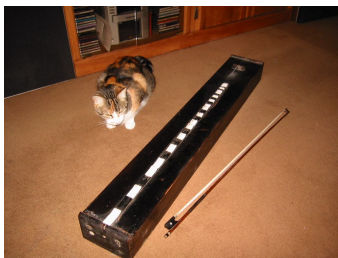
Their oldest son Ernest continued their work in the logging business beginning at the age of 10. Per Johan built a "Psalter" a single stringed instrument, played with bow and sang hymns.



Timber train in Lavene, OR



Farm at Cameron Creek, WA



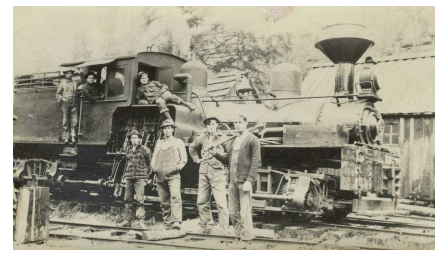
Psalter built by Per Johan



Grandpa Reinhardt logging team and their "donkey"



Ernest #2 in back row



Ernest driving the Rusty Shay,

At the End...

Per Johan and Hulda Anderson ended their long journey from Ljunghem in Skaraborgs County, Sweden to their farm along Cameron Creek, Longview, WA, and are buried at the Bunker Hill cemetery in Longview, WA.

Per Johan died December 7, 1927 at the age of 72, and Hulda followed him, to the shining city upon a hill, on September 20 1958, at the age of 93.

The story is written by Leif Rosqvist, the editor of New Swedish Roots In Oregon newsletter, in Portland, Oregon, based on material provided by the family.

Ernst Skarstedt trilogy of Swedes in the Far West

In 1911, the well-known Swedish-American author and journalist Ernst Skarstedt finished the third volume in his trilogy of Swedes in the Far West, *Oregon och dess svenska befolkning* (Oregon and its Swedish population). The book covered the period 1880 to 1910, and it was organized in the same way as its two predecessors—it began with a general history of the state, moved on to various activities of the Swedes, and concluded with substantial biographical section of prominent Swedish immigrants. The biographical section occupies half the book, and it was most likely done as a marketing device.

By including so many Swedish families, Skarstedt tried to ensure that he would have enough buyers to cover the cost of the printing, which he financed himself. Today, these stories have become a gold mine of information for both genealogists and researchers interested in ethnography, immigration and history in the state of Oregon.



Ernst Skarstedt
1857-1929

Two of his three books, in Swedish, are available on-line at Harvard library web-site on the web-addresses listed below:

Skarstedts California och dess svenska befolkning: <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4425786>

Skarstedts Washington och dess svenska befolkning: <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/6419836>

Unfortunately the Oregon book is not available. Information about the Oregon book is available on SRIO web-site, where a Skarstedt introduction and booklet translated by Lars Nordström could be purchased.

SRIO web-address: www.swedishrootsinoregon.org and go to Oregon Swedes 1911.

Samuel Magnus Hill web-site updated

Samuel Magnus Hill was born in Sund, Östergötland, Sweden on January 10, 1851 to Samuel and Maria (Ottar) Samuelson. The family emigrated to Altona, Illinois in 1868. Shortly after arriving in the U.S. the family changed their surname to Hill. The family eventually moved to Paxton, Illinois and finally they settled in Chariton, Iowa.

Samuel enrolled at Augustana College in 1875 at the age of 24 and graduated in 1879. He worked throughout his college years to support himself and pay the tuition. His parents were poor and unable to provide any financial assistance.

After graduation, Samuel went to Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota to teach music and other subjects. Shortly, after his arrival at Gustavus, the College decided to change to co-education and in the first class of girls, he met Julie Johnson whom he married in 1882. Hill stayed at Gustavus for three years.

Hill passed away on April 26, 1921, in Elgaros, Oregon.

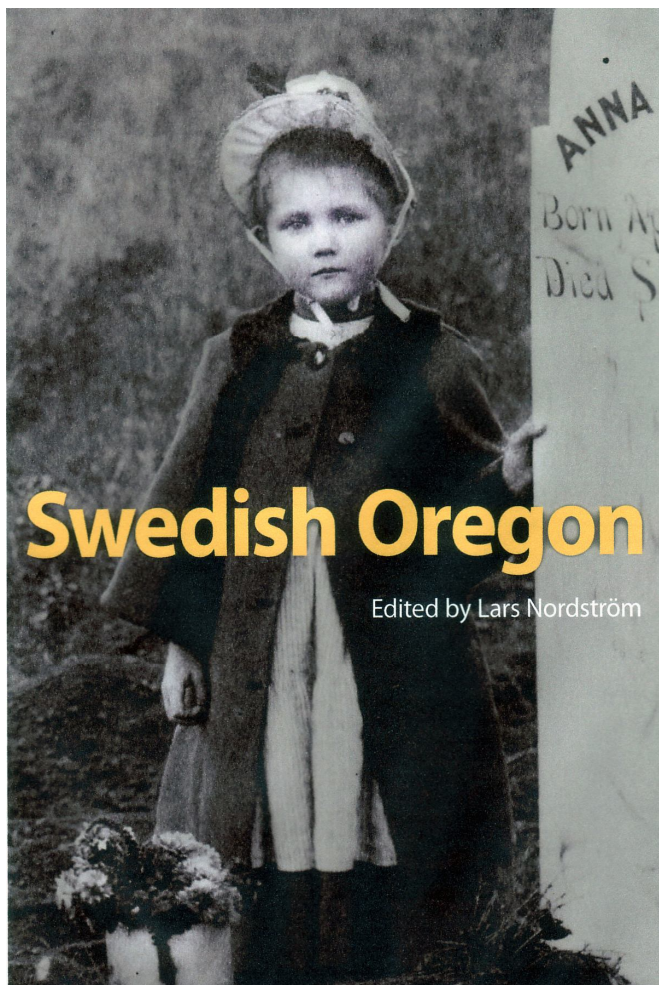
The web-site includes: S. M. Hills's Life in America

Photo Gallery

Selected Poems in English Translation

Valda Dikter

Meet us, and our new book at the Midsummer Event, Saturday June 27, 2009!



- Articles
- Excerpts from diaries
- Immigration narratives
- Oral history
- Poetry
- Historical photographs

For the first time in English, a richly illustrated history of the Swedes of Oregon from the late 1800s to the present.

“The real marvel of this book, however, is the vibrant collection of texts that broaden into *translation* of one important ethnic group’s experience of immigration and eventual settlement in Oregon.”

Erland G. Anderson,
Oregon English Journal

“Even if you haven’t previously read memories and stories on life as an immigrant to America, *Swedish Oregon* is the kind of book you will finish easily.”

Ulf Mårtenson, Editor
Nordstjernen

Books can be ordered directly from our website:
www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org