

# Swedish Roots In Oregon

## *An Immigration Research Project*

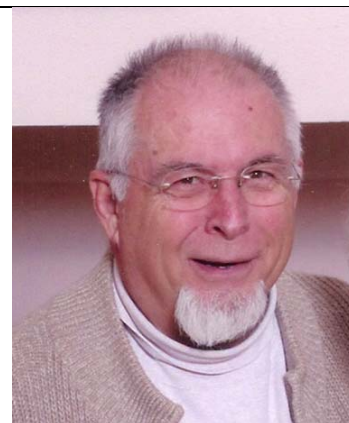
November 2009 Newsletter

Editor: Leif Rosqvist

Volume 20

### Message from the President, Barry Peterson

This has been another successful year at Swedish Roots In Oregon. We received many accolades on the book *Swedish Oregon*, published late last year it provided us with the resources to begin additional research activities with an option to publish findings. We thank all those who supported this effort, especially those who had the faith in SRIO and gave of their funds before the book was published and our key contributors, the Swedish Council of America, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation and Swedish Society Linnea. Our press run of the book is now reduced, but we will certainly have books available for the holidays this year. Many have told us the book makes an excellent gift choice.



As it turns out, this will be a year of completions for half the Board of Directors. Secretary Leif Rosqvist, Laurel Peterson and I have all decided to retire from our positions on the Board. These have been difficult decisions as we all consider the work of SRIO to have been personally rewarding and have enjoyed guiding the organization. I certainly am proud of this Board and thank all who serve on it --- Lars Nordström, Ross Fogelquist, Herje Wikegård, Leif and Laurel. It has been an excellent year for SRIO.

Lars has helped us establish an international presence by a series of presentations in Sweden and he has continued his talks in the Northwest, as well.

SRIO is weighing its options for continuing genealogical work and entries. We have a computer program and, again with volunteer time, enter the material we have gathered over the years into this program and it will become available on the web site. We continue to get inquiries about persons who have immigrated to Oregon but have been stretched too thin to make timely responses to some of the requesters. Every now and then, we get lucky. We had one request that took less than an hour of research to locate living relatives here in Oregon. The Swedes who requested the information ended up making a visit to the US and visited these relatives both in Utah and Oregon. SRIO could do considerably more with a few volunteers to do the genealogical research as there will not be anyone working on it next year, as of right now.

SRIO is structured as a not for profit corporation in Oregon and its only members are those on the Board of Directors. This was a purposeful decision when SRIO was formed. SRIO can use some dedicated souls with interests in administration, researching, newsletter preparation and especially Swedish and American genealogy. This will enable us to enhance the efforts of the organization make a contribution to the education of Oregonians and the Swedish-American community here. We can use your talents and can be contacted on line at [www.swedishrootsinoregon.org](http://www.swedishrootsinoregon.org) or by calling one of the Board members. Think about where you may fit in our scheme of things and VÄLKOMMEN TILL OSS.

*God Jul och ett Gott Nytt År* from Swedish Roots In Oregon.

See SRIO Website in color!

During its five years of existence, the SRIO website has grown and improved 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 and Immigration Stories; 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, has acquired new web software that will further improve our website.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Swedish Roots In Oregon website. At the top, the title "Swedish Roots In Oregon" is centered. Below it, there are two main columns. The left column is titled "An Immigration Research Project" and features a drawing of an immigrant ship with the text "Bort till det stora landet i vester!" and "År 1857. Det stora landet i vester!". Below the drawing is the caption "Immigrant ship ink drawing by Swedish artist Olof Grafström, ca 1885". The right column is titled "New Book Released" and features a book cover for "Swedish Oregon" by Lars Nordström. Below the book cover are links for "About", "Read an Excerpt", and "Order Form".

Links: [Home](#), [About Us](#), [Contact Us](#), [Newsletters](#), [Publications](#), [Stories](#)

Swedish Roots In Oregon

**An Immigration Research Project**

"Bort till det stora landet i vester!"

Immigrant ship ink drawing by Swedish artist Olof Grafström, ca 1885

**New Book Released**

**Swedish Oregon**  
Compiled and Edited by Lars Nordström

[About](#) [Read an Excerpt](#)  
[Order Form](#)

**Samuel Magnus Hill**

[S. M. Hill's Life in America](#)  
[Photo Gallery](#)  
[Selected Poems in English Translation](#)  
[Valda dikter](#)  
[New! A 2009 Journey to S. M. Hill's place of birth](#)

**Oregon Swedes of 1911**

[Ernst Skarstedt's Oregon-Swedish Biographies](#)

Ernst Skarstedts (1857 - 1929)

**NEW!** [Newsletter June 2009 - Volume 12](#)

**NEW!** [Stories of people and heritage](#)

Links: [Home](#), [About Us](#), [Contact Us](#), [Newsletters](#), [Publications](#)

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](http://www.larsnordstrom.com), or at our SRIO website, [www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org](http://www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org).

## Noteworthy Swedes in the Oregon Encyclopedia

After several years of planning and coordination, the online Oregon Encyclopedia is now up and running. This free and open resource for all things Oregon, is available 24 hrs a day to internet users. New material is continuously added to the site, and there is a great deal to explore there. The encyclopedia is a joint creation of Portland State University, the Oregon Historical Society and the Oregon Council of Teachers of English.

About a year ago, Swedish Roots in Oregon publications editor Lars Nordström was asked by the encyclopedia editors to write entries for three prominent Swedish-Oregon literary figures for the Literature section. In the encyclopedia you can now read about Samuel Magnus Hill (1851 – 1921), Ernst Skarstedt (1857 – 1929) and Vi Gale (1917 – 2007).



Samuel Magnus Hill



Ernst Skarstedt



Vi Gale

Learn more about the Swedish heritage in the state of Oregon! You will find it at

---

### SRIO at Portland's Midsummer Festival

We hope that all of you have recognized the shorter days indicating the soon arrival of winter, preparing us for the holiday season. This is also the time to remember our participation in our annual midsummer festival June last, at The German American Cultural Center.

SRIO had information and sales booth at the festival to spread the knowledge about our heritage as well as our new book project "Swedish Oregon" of which we have received a SCA grant.

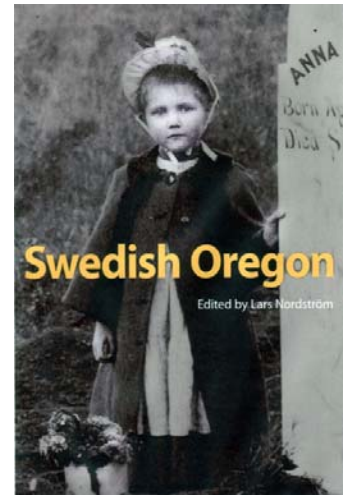


We had many visitors to our booth showing interest in what SRIO and copies of our newsletter was flying off the table, indicating that the visitors was looking for more information than a casual discussion at the booth.

## Swedish Oregon Book Reviews

by Lars Nordström

- This is the first book in English ever written about the Swedes of Oregon.
- *Swedish Oregon* was independently published.
- There is currently no book distributor for small presses in Oregon helping to promote this book.
- A mere handful of books has been sold through bookstores.
- The success of this book—with over 700 copies sold—is entirely due to the efforts of Swedish Roots in Oregon and the great support of curious readers in Oregon, the United States and the Swedes in Sweden .
- The reviewers have been overwhelmingly positive. If you would like to see what they have to say, here's the current review list.



### **Forthcoming:**

December 2009 issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*.

### **Published:**

Untitled. *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, April 2009, Vol. LX, No 2, p.93-95. By Paul Norlen.

“*Swedish Oregon.*” *Sweden & America*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2009, p. 11-12. By Alf Brorson.

“*Swedish Oregon.*” *Nordstjernen*, January 15, 2009, p.18. By Ulf Mårtenson.

“*Swedish Oregon.*” *Scandinavian Heritage Foundation Newsletter*, Dec. 2008 – February 2009. By Mike O’Bryant.

“Swath of change follows first Swedes to settle in Oregon.” *The Oregonian*, Sunday Dec. 14, 2008. By Katie Schneider.

“*Swedish Oregon: Translating Our Selves.*” *Oregon English Journal*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, Fall 2008, p. 57. By Erland G. Anderson.

“*Swedish Oregon. A Book in Review.*” *The Oregon Historian*, September 2008, p.19. By Tracy Laine.



# Per Wilhelm Wiklund – An Oregon logger's journey through life

## Background...

Some of the largest forested areas in the United States are located west of the Cascade mountains in Oregon and Washington, and the most northern part of the California coastal range.

The low elevation forests of western Oregon have a checkered history involving railroads, corruption and even the Supreme Court since settlers moved west. The history of these forests reflects how the west was settled. One of the biggest obstacles to westward expansion was transportation. Moving goods and encouraging people to move thousands of miles across a rugged, wild landscape was certainly a challenge – without the advantage of cars and airplanes that we have today.

The most valued trees in the area are the Douglas Fir, reaching a height of 200-300 ft and a diameter of 8-10 ft feet, and the California Redwood trees growing along the coastal areas, all of them giants in the forest.

These trees produced large planks for building ships, bridges and other objects where strong and hard wood was required.

If you were able to cut and transport the wood, there were significant business opportunities to be had.



Forest land in Oregon



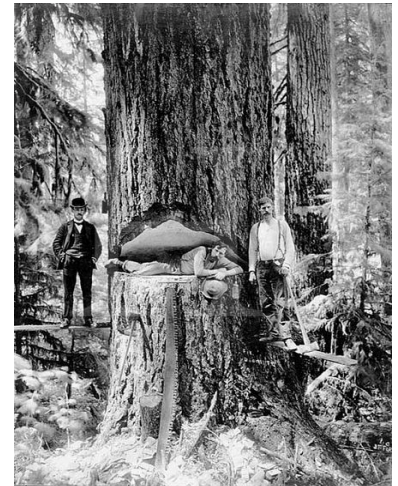
Oregon Cut Timber



Early transportation by mule



Later transportation by train



Timber Cutting

## Who wants to be a logger...

### Tall Timber Calls

There's a wild call from the mountain  
Lone wolf calls at a moon beam  
The urgent calls of a pine squirrel  
And the chilling cougar's scream.

I've thrilled to the cry of the loon  
And the cooing of the dove  
The piercing scream of an eagle  
And the poets song of love.

I've heard the cry of the falcon  
And the hoot-owl's mournful call  
A pack of hungry coyotes  
And a tiny baby's squall.

Heard the loggers call timber  
And the squawking of the crow  
There's one call that gets my attention  
Mother nature calls...I go.

Lon Minkler's *Uncut, Uncensored, Logger Poetry*

*One logger heard the call...*

William Wicklund was born Per Wilhelm Wiklund on February 25, 1887 in the Parish of Hammerdal, province of Jämtland, Sweden. His parents were Elisabeth Davina Röst and Nils Olov Viklund. He eventually ended up in Tromsø, Norway, where a Norwegian family took him under their wing. In fact, they entered his name in their family Bible as a member of the Marenborg family. Eventually, he decided to go to North America, and arrived in Quebec, Canada on July 5, 1922. The exact date he entered the United States is unknown; he and two friends hid in a boxcar on a train headed for Idaho. He worked in Idaho as a logger, in Tacoma at a lumber mill, and eventually returned to logging. He worked in Washington and Oregon as a *timber faller* for many years.



Timber Fallers

“Willie”, as he was called, worked at various logging camps all over the northwest from the famous Ryderwood logging camp in Washington state, Buster Creek and David Creek camps in Oregon, and a railroad company as a “gandy dancer” laying rails in Doyle, California.



Willie early  
1920s

We know this from return addresses from more than 100 letters Willie wrote to Gertrude Pearson (Gurtie, his future wife) on North Montana Avenue starting in 1925 and ending in 1930.

While working in a Northwest logging camp, “Willie” was told about the Square Deal Café in Portland that was owned by a nice Swedish woman who cooked good old country food. The Square Deal was located on the West Side at NW 4<sup>th</sup> and Couch. The friend also told him that he should meet his cute little girlfriend who was the woman’s daughter. The minute he met her, Willie was hooked. He often talked about spending so much time at the café drinking coffee just so he would have a chance to visit with her. What he did not realize was that she was not his friend’s girlfriend, but it did not take long for him to figure that out. In later years, Willie told everyone he fell in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. She was 15 and he was 28.



Gertrude in front  
of Square Deal  
Cafe

The Square Deal was quite popular with all of the Swedish loggers who came to town and the Swedish men working on the Burnside Bridge. Gertrude was a favorite with all of the young Swedish men, and they treated her like a younger sister. She worked seven days a week but still found time to go dancing two or three times a week and her friends were quite willing to be her partner. She was a very good dancer and loved nothing better than having the chance to attend a dance, at the Swedish Linnea Hall among others.



Popular Cafe      Ore-

Gertrude Pearson was born in Alamagardo, New Mexico on May 16, 1910. When she was 18 months old the family moved to Portland, Oregon. Her father was Charles A. Pearson (Karl Axel Persson), born in Dömle, Ullerude, Parish of Kil, Province of Värmland, March 9, 1873. Charles emigrated to the U.S. April 1893. Her mother was Sara Victoria Danielson, born February 2, 1886 in Vallåsen, Ramsele in Ångermanland. Charles and Victoria were married in Cloquet, Minnesota on November 29, 1905. Victoria entered the United States in June 1904.

## The Logging Camps...

There were no homes out in the woods and traveling long distances every day to get to work was impossible. The logging company built these logging camps conveniently located along a railroad track for easy transport of logs out and people and supply into the camp.

The logging company built camp houses, maintained them and provided a commissary for essential foodstuff.

The logging trains provided transportation to a spot near the logging area and the men had to walk the rest of the way, carrying their crosscut saws (also called Swede saws), axes and other tools used to fell trees.

Being a logger was not child's play, it was a very dangerous line of work with a trail of very many mangled bodies left behind. On top of the physical risks from the work, they had to deal with very temperamental weather conditions in the woods.

In Detroit, Oregon, a report was given of an accident involving one of the trains. An engine was derailed, cars were damaged, logs were lost, and almost as an afterthought, noted something to the effect that besides the equipment damage “a man was killed”.

Here are some selected examples of **Lumberjack Lingo**

illustrating what was happening:

**High-ball:** to be in a hurry, sometimes without respect for safety

**Running saw:** cutting timber, also referred to as “working on the saw”

**Skid road:** rough path over which logs are dragged to the landing (from which the “skid row derived”)

**White finger:** numbness of the hands due to long-term use of chain saws

**Widow maker:** loose limb or top hanging in a tree that can be dislodged by wind or the force of a falling tree; the impact of a limb that is only an inch or two in diameter can cause serious injury and death

**Chokers:** cables attached to logs

*Adapted from Deadfall (Mountain Press)*

Logging team with their “Donkey” which was a steam driven system to retrieve logs with chokers from cutting areas to landings for transport.



Walport Logging Camp, Oregon



Loggers in front of cabin



Willie 2nd from the right at East Side logging in Keasey, Oregon





## Conclusion...

Many love letters came out of the woods to Gertrude at the Square Deal Café in west Portland during the period 1925—1930. The letters also indicate that everything was very tight even if you are ready to get married; “I don’t think I will come and see you sweetheart, before we get married. If I take a trip in before that time it will cost some money, and you know how it is, honey. We need every cent we can get hold of when we get married”.

Willie and Gertrude were married December 8, 1928 at the Polish Hall which is still in use on Interstate Avenue. The sign in the front says Polish Library Association and it is next to the Catholic Church which was no doubt founded by Polish immigrants.

When Gertrude joined the Vasa Nobel Lodge in Portland, their meetings were at the Polish Hall.

Little Willie was born on June 25, 1930 and was named Norman William Wicklund. Daughter Joyce Ann was born on February 23, 1933.

Willie was back working in the woods in 1936. They rented a house at Fishhawk Falls, and Willie worked at Tidewater Logging Co. The family moved to Aloha around 1938, and Joyce and Norman remember their father still working in the woods. He eventually become a longshoreman during the 1940’s and retired as a longshoreman.

They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the home of their daughter and son-in-law in 1978, with many of the people who had been at their wedding in attendance. Of course, both Joyce and Norman were there with their children.

Willie died on October 15, 1980 followed by Gertrude on May 15, 1999. Before she died, Gertrude told Joyce that she always knew how much she was loved. Norman and Joyce knew that too, but after reading his letters to her, it reinforced what they already felt. Willie never wanted to be away from her, and when she got mad at him, he always felt bad.

Mother told Joyce as she was dying to not worry about her. She had a long, happy life, and was ready to go. She and Daddy were going fishing!

Story written by Leif Rosqvist, the editor of New Sweden Heritage Society and SRIO newsletters. The story is based on more than 100 letters written by Willie to Gertrude from various logging camps in the northwest during the period 1925 to 1930.

### References:

Ernst Skarstedt: “Oregon och dess svenska befolkning”  
History of Oregon BLM — Oregon’s Heritage Forests  
Alger Sullivan—The logging camps

### Interesting reading:

SRIO book: Swedish Oregon, available at [www.swedishrootsinoregon.org](http://www.swedishrootsinoregon.org)  
Rachelle E. (Shelly) Voie: Entering Ryderwood: Family Logging Camp at the End of the Road  
“Gandy dancer”: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandy\\_dancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandy_dancer)



Gertrude Pearson & William  
Wicklund - 12/8/1928



See us and our new book at the ScanFair Event, Dec. 5 & 6, 2009!

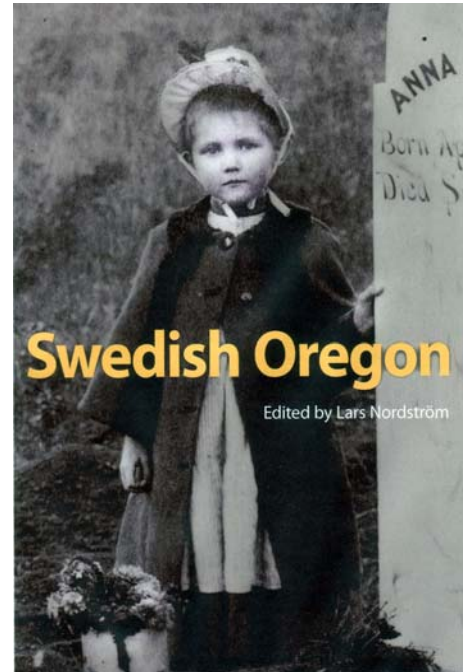


SRIO ScanFair Booth 2008

We will share:

- 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  
*Nordstjernan*

Books can be ordered directly from our website:  
[www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org](http://www.SwedishRootsInOregon.org)

---

Please support SRIO!

There are many ways you can support the study and dissemination of the Swedish history in the state of Oregon. Buying our publications is an obvious one, but you can also make a tax-deductible gift to SRIO. We are approved by the IRS as a Sec. 501[c] [3] organization. Financial assistance is greatly appreciated.

Tack så mycket!