

Swedish Roots in Oregon

An Immigration Research Project



December 2015 Newsletter

Editor: Leif Rosqvist

Volume 32

Message from your President - Ross Fogelquist

The Swedish community was very sad to hear that Lars Nordstrom had resigned his position with Swedish Roots in Oregon. He has decided to return to Sweden after living in the U.S. for 30 years. He served on the Board for many years and was president for the past ten years. Under his leadership many booklets were published and three major books were compiled and edited by Lars. He often made public appearances detailing the history of Swedes in Oregon. Lars made the history of Swedes in Oregon a fascinating topic for all those who read his books or heard his lectures.

His leadership will be greatly missed not only by the SRIO board but by his many friends and admirers in the Swedish community.

Ingeborg Dean has also resigned from the SRIO board of directors. She served a very important part on the SRIO board. She served as secretary and represented SRIO at many public events and Scandinavian festivals. She interviewed many Swedish immigrants and wrote and transcribed stories about their fascinating lives. She is now living in the Washington D.C. area.

Ross Fogelquist, the founder of SRIO, has been serving as interim president since the resignation of Lars Nordstrom. Starting in January the newly elected president Rhonda Erlandson will serve as president. She is currently as secretary of SRIO and has been involved in researching the Swedish presence in Warren Oregon.

We encourage anyone who is interested in the history of Swedes in Oregon to contact us. You will find it an fascinating experience.

Read more on our web-site: www.swedishrootsinoregon.org

Website Corner

by Herje Wikegård

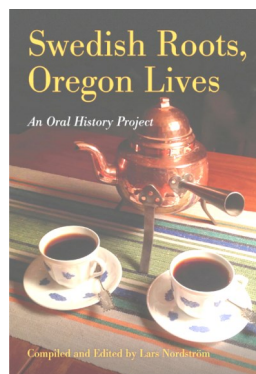
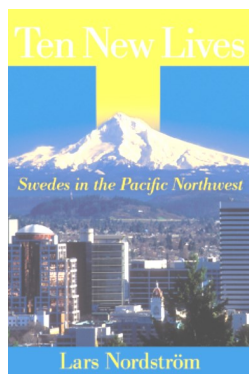
The website has a new story published. This one is about the Swedish community Cherry Grove in Oregon and is written by Jerry C. Olson, who is both a second and third generation Swede. It is an eight page PDF with many interesting pictures. Here is a little sample:

My first relative to come to Cherry Grove was my father's uncle, John Leo Nylund (Johann Leander Nylund, b. 1885, Bodsjö, Jämtland), who immigrated in 1907 with a friend to Bellingham, WA at age 22. He soon moved to Preston, WA, near Issaquah, where he worked for August Lovegren in sawmilling or in logging. August was a Swedish lumberman from Minnesota, and when August purchased 7500 acres of land in the upper Tualatin Valley in 1910, John and many other Preston Swedes followed him to what would become Cherry Grove

SRIO will participate in Portland ScanFair event in Portland

Saturday December 5, 2015: 10am - 5pm, and Sunday December 6, 2015: 10am - 4pm

Get ready to celebrate the sights, sounds, tastes and traditions of Swedish Christmas. The event will be at Portland Veterans Coliseum Exhibit Hall. SRIO will attend with its own booth at the event where you are able to meet other members and share Swedish experiences. You will also see our books for sale at the event.



Please support the shops that sell our books:

Scandia Imports, 10020 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy, Beaverton, OR 97005, (503) 643-2424

Finn Ware, 1116 Commercial Street, Astoria, OR 97103, (503) 325-5720

Beach Books, Beach Books, 37 North Edgewood, Seaside, OR 97138, (503) 738-3500

Scandinavian Specialties, 6719 15th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98117, (877) 784-7020

Nordic Heritage Museum, 3014 NW 67th St, Seattle, WA 98117, (206) 789-5707

You can always reach us with questions or comments through our website:

Contact the SRIO President: President@swedishrootsinoregon.org

Contact the SRIO Genealogist: Genealogy@swedishrootsinoregon.org

Contact the SRIO Webmaster: Webmaster@swedishrootsinoregon.org or write an old-fashioned letter to SRIO, 8740 SW Oleson Rd, Portland, OR 97223

www.swedishrootsinoregon.org

SRIO Needs Help with Marketing

SRIO is, as many of you know, an educational, non-profit organization. We are a small research group that usually meets every month or so. Each member is asked to focus on some of the many tasks we do throughout the year. Still, even though our combined skills add up to a great deal of expertise, we need help with marketing the books we produce. Would you like to help us preserve and make the Swedish history of Oregon better known by promoting our books to bookstores and Scandinavian gift shops? We could really use your help and would love to hear from you!

Swedes Logging along the Columbia River

by Lars Nordström

The research on the logging activities of the Swedes – and the Norwegians and Finns – who worked in the woods of the Pacific Northwest a hundred years ago is now nearing completion. Lars Nordström spent the previous year visiting libraries, archives, and private individuals scanning a large number of historical photographs depicting the technical evolution of the timber industry from the 1880s through the 1920s. This fifty-year period depicts the early use of hand tools, oxen, and horses, and the transition to the steam donkey and the temporary logging railroad which revolutionized speed, efficiency, and yield. In addition, the photographs also show the Native Americans that preceded them, life in the camps, glimpses from the kind of “rest and recreation” that was favored at the time.



As he collected photographs, Lars also began dipping into the voluminous literature on the history of logging in the Pacific Northwest. Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns made up a large part of the work force; taken as a whole they may have been a majority. There were so many Swedish loggers that it has been said that every camp had a man called “Swede” whether he was one or not, because it was unimaginable that there should not be one! The Swedes also left some interesting terms behind, such as (among others) “Swedish steam” (strength or muscle power), “Swedish brain food” – another word for “snooze,” a word which is still in use among loggers today.

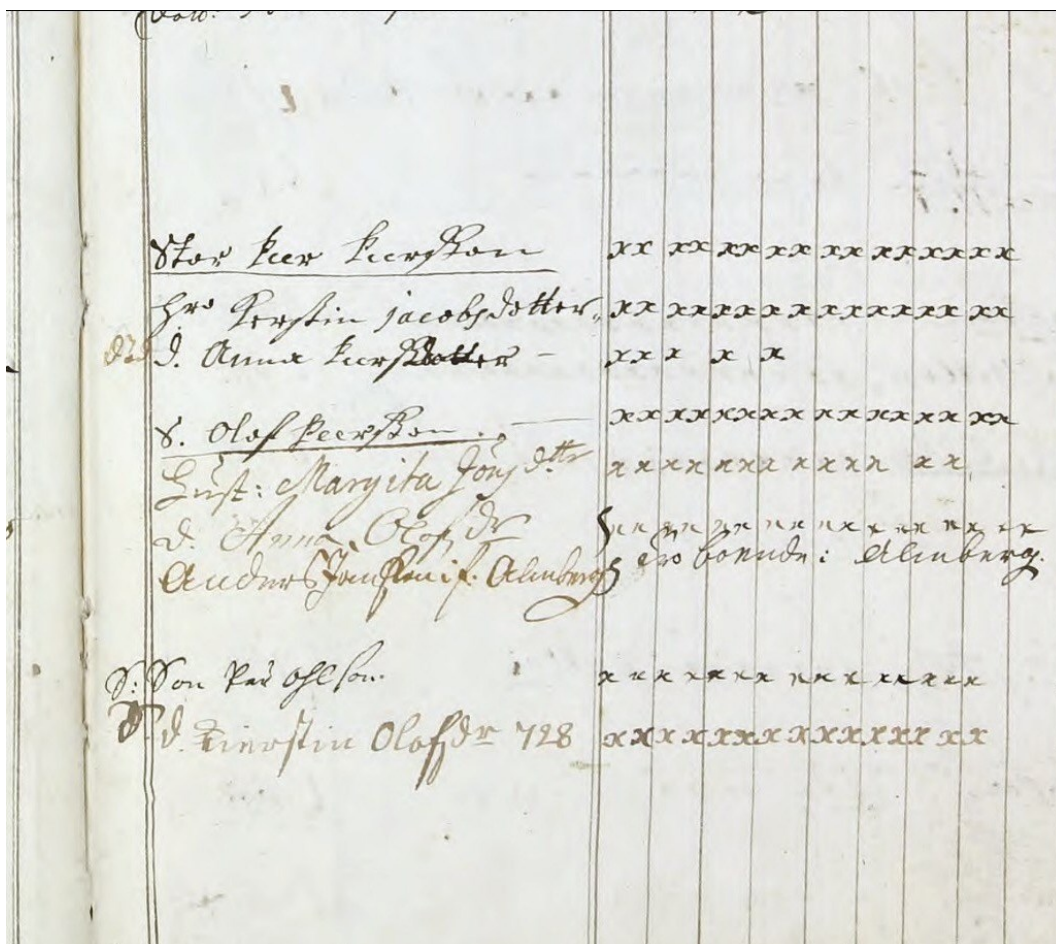
The logging industry was known for its many accidents, making it one of the most dangerous professions in the United States. The winters were rainy, living conditions primitive, the food usually excellent and always plentiful, and the availability of jobs went up and down following the boom and bust cycles of the US lumber market. The early part of the 20th century also saw the difficult struggle spear-headed by the I.W.W. to unionize the work force to improve the lot of the loggers and sawmill workers. Even though he was not active in the Pacific Northwest, the Swede Joe Hill was a well-known name to all I.W.W. card carrying members.

This rich collection of visual and historical material has now been compiled into a book – *I Fjärran västerns skogar* – that will be published in Sweden in the spring of 2016 in conjunction with a museum exhibit at the Swedish American Center in Karlstad. Many generous individuals in the Northwest donated tools and things related to this exhibit, and the shipping container carrying them from Oregon to Värmland arrived in Karlstad in late November. If your travel plans will take you Sweden next summer, be sure to visit once you have checked the exact exhibit dates.

The Genealogy Corner

by Ann Stuller

SRIO receives requests for assistance with family research questions. A few weeks ago, a request for help in deciphering a handwritten Swedish church record came from Cheryl Clark in Salem:



The above household/husförhör record is from the 1700s in Leksand, Dalarna. The problem concerned the “first” word before the name Pier Persson. At first glance, it appears to be “Stor”/big. However that would be a bit unusual since normally the occupation comes before the name rather than a physical description. Eighteenth century handwriting had significant differences as shown in the following chart:



Comparing the church record with the handwriting chart, the first letter of the word in question is “s” which is the abbreviation for “son”. Following that is a capital “T” and “or” and a period: in other words, the abbreviation for “topare” or crofter. Pier Persson can now be identified by both occupation and relationship.

Finding your roots is an exciting process full of twists

by David Anderson

Find your roots is an exciting process full of twists, turns and tangents. You never know what you will find, or where you will find the next exciting piece of information. It is a never ending process! Once you are bitten by the bug you will be hooked for life!

My father's mother's parents moved from Linderås in Småland and married in Chicago, Illinois before moving to Iowa for a time. After Iowa they lived near White City in Kansas before finally settling in the Swedish colony at Colton, Oregon.

I have been amazed at the generosity of Swedish genealogists who want to help Americans of Swedish descent re-connect with their roots in Sweden. Re-connecting with the place and your relatives is a most rewarding endeavor. To help repay the time and energy of the Swedish genealogists I have undertaken a large project of helping to record people of Swedish origins who lived in Oregon. This is no small project!

Several years ago I started adding information to the Swedish American Heritage Online (sweame.org) website. Trips are made to the Oregon State Archives where documents housed at the archives are scanned. Most of the documents scanned are death certificates, but also include marriage, divorce, coroner's reports, prison records, and others. Trips to cemeteries are also made where headstones are photographed. These documents, and photographs, are a treasure trove that help shed light on the diversity and richness of the Swedish community in Oregon. The information posted helps relatives of these individuals in their search to connect with long lost relatives. Photos that are included in some of these immigration and prison records may be the only photo in existence of some of these individuals.

While extracting data from any document efforts are made to record as much information as possible from the document about that person in regards to dates, location and activity involved. Scanned copies of the documents, and headstone photos – if available, are generally included in a media folder for that person. I try and also spend time geocoding the locations involved so that when someone inspects the information page of an individual the story of the person is told, not just with data, but with documents and mapped locations.

For example see the information that is included for Charlotta Augusta Anderson who lived in the wheat fields of Morrow County: <http://swedesintexas.com/getperson.php?personID=11498&tree=srio>

Or the page for Carl Walter Wallberg who settled in Tillamook County:

<http://swedesintexas.com/getperson.php?personID=11777&tree=srio>

I am sure that after looking at these two (still very incomplete) examples of individual pages the importance of the SRIO database is readily apparent.

From the genealogy corner.

by Ann Baudin Stuller

Starting out on the search for your Swedish roots can be quite an adventure. There are several good places to start including interviewing family members. Memories may be jogged to recall long ago stories or conversations which can provide the initial information.



Perhaps there is an old box filled with family mementos: old letters, postcards, photos, travel documents, even citizenship papers or a family Bible which can reveal the origins of your family members. Armed with place names and birthdates your access to Swedish church records may not be an insurmountable task.

Much information is available online including an introduction to Swedish genealogy written by James E. Erickson and Nils William Olsson, Tracing your Swedish Ancestry:

www.swedenabroad.com/Selectimage/15063/tracingyourswedishancestry.pdf

Two US websites have Swedish church records available: FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com. Ancestry also has immigration and passenger lists as well as vital records, US Census records, public records, naturalization records, and a selection of Evangelical Lutheran Church of America records. Riksarkivet (SVAR) and Arkivdigital are two Swedish sources.

Immigration information is available also on www.CastleGarden.org and www.libertyellisfoundation.org. It is helpful to know the name and approximate year of entrance to the US plus any variations of spelling of the last name. For example, Johansson sometimes became Johnson on a ship manifest.

To locate information about relatives currently living in Sweden, use any of the following: www.hitta.se, www.birthday.se, or www.eniro.se to find addresses and phone numbers.

When you find a "brick wall", and need some assistance, genealogy@swedishrootsinoregon.org may help you find an answer. If your family immigrated to Oregon, we always welcome additional information to add to our Swedish Roots in Oregon database.