

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter / October 2016

North Park University at 125 and the Swedish-American Historical Society

As one of the institutions of higher learning established by Swedish immigrants, North Park University's 125th anniversary merits both observance and recognition that for close to seventy years it has been the physical home of the Swedish-American Historical Society. The college and seminary begun by the Swedish Mission Covenant in 1891 spent its first three years in Minneapolis, housed in the basement of Erik August Skogsbergh's Svenska Tabernaklet, a large and thriving congregation of newly arrived Swedes. It moved to Chicago in 1894, locating on the outskirts of a city experiencing explosive expansion. By



North Park University

1900 there were more Swedes living in Chicago than in any city outside Stockholm. Soon the new location became the school's name: North Park. Then a fledgling seminary, college, and academy in a Swedish enclave, today it is a university of about 3,200 students in what has been said to be the most multicultural zip code in the United States.

Swedish immigrants and generations of Americans of Swedish descent have formed many organizations, and in terms of documenting and recording this broad history none has arguably been more important than the Swedish-American Historical Society in its membership, public programs, archives, and academic publications (since 1950 a quarterly journal and more than thirty books), and playing a critical part in the network of scholars and other organizations throughout North America and Scandinavia. There were earlier attempts at organizing. A Swedish-American Historical Society was formed in Minneapolis in

1889, but this proved premature and there is no record of its life other than its incorporation. More lasting was the Swedish Historical Society of America, formed in Chicago in 1905 by academic, cultural, and business leaders. North Park's president, David Nyvall, was a founder and he remained active throughout the years in its leadership and publications, along with other North Parkers and Covenanters. This society moved its base to Minnesota in the early 1920s and then folded in 1934, largely because of financial challenges. Its library went to the University of Minnesota, and its papers to the Minnesota Historical Society.

Meanwhile, Swedish-American historians, church administrators, business and cultural leaders had witnessed the formation of the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) in 1925; its close ties with, and home at, St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota; and its impressive ongoing success with archives and a scholarly publication program. This had many parallels to the founding of the SAHS in 1948 and its historical ties to North Park. A committee was formed in 1945 to begin the planning of a nationwide centennial celebration of the Swedish mass immigration, which had been interrupted by WWII. Its chairman was Conrad Bergendoff (president of Augustana College) and the vice-chairman was Algot Ohlson (president of North Park College and Seminary). The full-time national coordinator for three years was North Park graduate and Covenanter, Nils William Olsson. It was an enormous success, and culminated at a gathering in June 1948 of 18,000 Swedish Americans at Chicago Stadium. The featured speaker was President Harry Truman, followed by Prince Bertil of Sweden, and finally the poet Carl Sandburg—who came to the podium quite late and finished his address at 1:15 a.m. The Swedish Pioneer Historical Society was born out of the momentum and proceeds of the centennial celebration the following October. Carl Sandburg became its honorary chairman, and several with ties to North Park assumed leadership roles as officers, members of the board of directors, and editorial responsibilities—whether employed by the school or well-

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known as faculty members at major American universities. Karl Olsson (then professor of church history and younger brother of Nils William), for example, was the Society's first secretary. Of the 140 or so persons who have served as board members since 1948, at least thirty-three have had close ties to North Park. Its president for the past twenty-seven years has been a North Park faculty member.

Initially, the new Society rented an office space at 110 North LaSalle Street, but soon after relocated its office to the campus of North Park. When Wallgren Library was completed in 1958, space was made available for an office and whatever books and archival materials it was gathering. When the Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago was formally established in 1968, President Karl Olsson made arrangements for the Society to occupy two rooms in the basement of Nyvall Hall—where periodic flooding was a challenge in those days. During the 1970s and into the 80s there was intramural competition for the Society's archives to relocate. President Lloyd Ahlem assured SAHS leadership that the archives would always have a home at North Park, even should the Society ever cease to exist. This would be formally arranged in November 1986, with the strong support of President William Hausman, in a signed tri-partite agreement with North Park, the Evangelical Covenant



Bungalow on Christiana Avenue

Church, and SAHS to manage these three primary archival collections, today housed together in the F. M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections in Brandel Library. In the meantime, however, the Society and its archives had had offices in Caroline Hall, and then in a bungalow on Christiana Avenue. Since 2001, the Society's office had been in the lower level of Sohlberg Hall.

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Archives Exhibit Celebrates North Park University History

In celebration of North Park University's 125th anniversary in 2016, the F.M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections has curated the exhibit *Cultivating Great Intellects & Great Hearts: North Park University's Quasiquicentennial*. It traces the evolution of the Covenant school in Minneapolis to the university in Chicago through narrative, photographs, artifacts and publications from the archives. North Park historians Philip J. Anderson, Hauna Ondrey (also editor of the text), and Kurt Peterson penned the text

while working closely with designer Joanna Wilkinson (head of circulation and communications at the NPU library) and curator Anna-Kajsa Anderson (director of archives).



“It was important for this exhibit to recount not only the often-told story of our beginnings,” says Kajsa Anderson, “but also that of the past two decades. That newer story hasn't been told as much. We hope it shows to the students who walk by the exhibit every day that their present is on the cusp of history.” Showcased artifacts include the typewriter owned by founding president David Nyvall, a football helmet from the centennial of college football in 1969, and student publications ranging from the first yearbook in 1916 to a magazine launched in 2014. The exhibit is accompanied by a booklet offering expanded text as well as selected photographs and artifacts from the display. “The authors wrote such a great narrative that we couldn't bring ourselves to edit it down for the exhibit without offering the full version elsewhere” says Anderson.

Cultivating Great Intellects & Great Hearts is on display through December 2016 on the second floor balcony of the Johnson Center for Science and Community Life at North Park University in Chicago. For more information, see www.northpark.edu/archives

Society Fall Meeting with SCA in November

The Swedish-American Historical Society will hold its fall meeting in conjunction with the Swedish Council of America meeting in Chicago on November 4-5. The Society was one of four founding organizations of SCA in 1972. Together they will share an awards reception and program at Saint James Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Chicago on Friday evening, November 4, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. To register for the event and learn further details, go to <http://swedishcouncil.org/meetings/upcoming-sca-meetings/> The cost is \$10 with prior registration, or \$20 at the door. *Please join us for this festive event recognizing several persons who have contributed to the life of Swedish America, and in particular the individuals the Society will honor with its awards.*

PLEASE JOIN US as two of Swedish America's national organizations recognize leaders within the Swedish community at the joint Swedish Council of America and Swedish-American Historical Society Autumn 2016 Awards Presentation



The Jimmy Lind Chalice, given to Saint Angarius Swedish Church in 1851.



SCA Award of Merit

- Lee Ann Carlson**
American Scandinavian Association at Augustana
- Loryann Eis**
American Scandinavian Association at Augustana
- Barbara G. Froemming**
Swedish American Historical Society of Wisconsin
- Beverly Olson Wenzel**
Swedish American Historical Society of Wisconsin

SCA Proclamation

- SWEA – Chicago**
in honor of its 35th Anniversary
- Swedish American Museum**
in honor of its 40th Anniversary
- American Daughters of Sweden**
in honor of its 90th Anniversary
- North Park University**
in honor of its 125th Anniversary

SCA Great Achievement Award

- Kerstin Lane**
for a lifetime of achievements in the Swedish-American community



Carl Sandburg Medal

- Dag Blanck, Donald E. Olson**

Franklin Scott Prize

- Donald Sandy, John Everett Jones, Jennifer Liber Raines**

Emerging Scholar's Prize

- Marcus Cederström**

The Joint SCA & SAHS Autumn 2016 Awards Presentation

The Boards of Directors of The Swedish-American Historical Society and Swedish Council of America invite you to join us as we honor and recognize these outstanding leaders for their efforts in promoting understanding of Swedish heritage and culture and in building stronger ties between Sweden and America.

Friday, November 4, 2016

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

D. Kyle Beecken Memorial Gallery
Saint James Episcopal Cathedral
65 E Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611

Beverages and hors d'oeuvres will be served

\$10/person online in advance (sales end Oct. 25)
\$20/person at the door

www.swedishcouncil.org

JOIN US:

Friday, November 4, 2016

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Chicago, Illinois



3030 West River Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55406 USA

The Swedish-American Historical Society will hold its usual board of directors meeting at North Park University on Saturday, November 5. A joint luncheon for the boards of SAHS and SCA will also take place on Saturday, hosted by North Park University, a fine opportunity to see the exhibit associated with North Park's 125th anniversary and for the boards to mingle socially. Several members of the Society's board have also served on SCA's board through the years.

SAHS Awards Honorees

Carl Sandburg Medals

On Friday evening, November 4, the Swedish-American Historical Society will present four awards to six individuals as part of the Awards Event with Swedish Council of America. Two people will be given the *Carl Sandburg Medal*, the Society's highest award. Dag Blanck,



Dag Blanck

Professor of North American Studies and director of the Swedish Institute for North American Studies at Uppsala University, will be honored for his many contributions to Swedish-American immigration history and trans-national relations between Sweden and the United States. He is a major spokesman in the Swedish media for understanding issues and events in the U.S. Since 1985, he has also been the director of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College in Rock Island. The author or editor of a dozen books and more than fifty scholarly articles, Dag is a longtime member of the Society's board of directors and its publications committee.

Donald E. Olson, the Society's treasurer since 1998 and chair of the board of the Center for Scandinavian Studies at North Park University from 2002 to the present, will also receive the *Sandburg Medal*. A high school math teacher for thirty-seven years until his retirement in 1999—to be followed by eight years in the math department at North Park University—Don's service to the Society on a day-to-day basis has been intangible and incalculable, for which it remains grateful. His work with students from both countries in the



Don Olson

Swedish exchange program at NPU has been extensive in arranging details and extending hospitality, including teaching two semesters in Sweden.

Writing Prizes

The Society will also award two prizes related to contributions to the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. The *Emerging Scholar's Prize* will be given to B. Marcus Cederström, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, for his article "Don't Mourn, Educate: Signe Aurell and the Swedish-American Labor Press" in the April 2016 *Quarterly*. The *Franklin Scott Prize*, given for the best article by an author previously-unpublished in the *Quarterly*, will be shared by Donald Sandy, John Everett Jones, and Jennifer Liber Raines for their article, "The Buffalo Orphan Asylum and the Settlement of Swedes in Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York," in the October issue. Both prizes include a \$250 award.

Obituary

Professor Arnold Barton (1929-2016)

It is with deepest sadness that we share news from Sweden at press time that Dr. H. Arnold Barton died on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, in Stockholm at the age of 86.



Aina and Arnold Barton

Arnold's contributions to the Swedish-American Historical Society defy compilation. He edited the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* from 1974-1990, served on the Society's board of directors for several decades, and continued to serve on the publications committee even after he and his wife, Aina Bergman Barton, moved to Sweden after retiring from Southern Illinois University. He was a faithful mentor to many younger scholars.

Arnold's roles in the fields of Scandinavian history and Scandinavian-American immigration history were singularly significant. He was the doyen among scholars studying these fields. He consistently pursued new paths of inquiry and interpretation, making an abiding contribution to immigration and ethnic studies. Truly an international scholar, Arnold authored nearly twenty books and hundreds of articles. A more complete account of Arnold's life and work will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Quarterly*.

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The Swedish-American Historical Society is well aware of its indebtedness to the hospitality North Park has shown to it through seven decades. The most successful and enduring

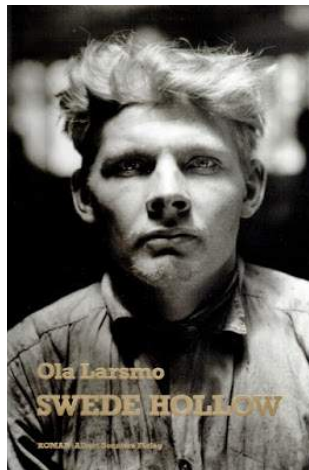


historical organizations, whose mission it is to record and interpret the presence and lives of immigrant people, have been attached, formally or by relationship, to an academic institution. The Society thus expresses profound gratitude to North Park and well wishes on reaching this significant milestone in its mission to provide quality education on its bucolic campus imbedded within a world-class city.

Book News

Swedish-language novel by Ola Larsmo

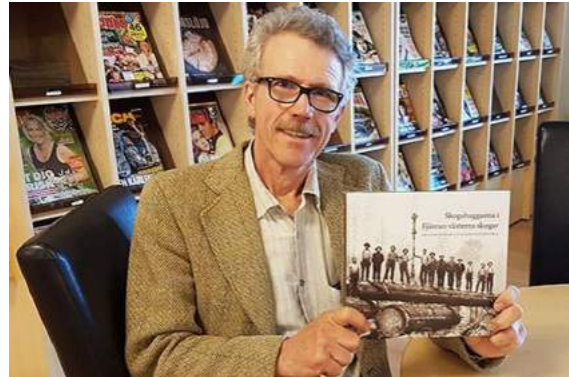
In September, Swedish publisher Albert Bonniers Förlag published Ola Larsmo's Swedish-language novel entitled *Swede Hollow*. The novel takes place in 1897 in the real-life community of the same name nestled at the bottom of a ravine on the east side of St. Paul, Minnesota. "Svenska Dalen" became home to many newly-arrived Swedish immigrants from the 1880s to about 1915, mostly poor and seeking opportunity in a new land. Squatters who paid rent to live in a variety of shacks along Phelan Creek (which city authorities often referred to as a slum because of its outhouses and lack of services), many families still trace their origins to this settlement. These mostly forgotten immigrants were not the farmers of Vilhelm Moberg's mid-nineteenth-century rural Minnesota novels or the well-to-do Swedes living up on Payne Avenue. Well-known Swedish journalist and author, Ola Larsmo, brings them to life in *Swede Hollow*. The book, much anticipated in Sweden and covered by several newspapers and reviews, will merit a



published translation in English. For more information, see <http://www.albertbonniersforlag.se/Bocker/Svensk-skonlitteratur/S/swede-hollow/>

Society member publishes history in Swedish on immigrants to Pacific Northwest

Long-time Society member Lars Nordström has published a new book in Swedish about Swedish immigrants who worked in the timber and logging industries in the Pacific Northwest. *Skogshuggarna i Fjärran västerns skogar: En unik svensk utvandringshistoria* (Woodcutters in the Far Western Forests: A Unique Swedish Migration History)



Lars Nordström

tells the story of the influx of Swedish and Scandinavian immigrants who moved to the Pacific Northwest after the railroad was built west to Portland, Oregon, in 1883 to work in the timber industry. The book looks primarily at a small representative area on either side of the Columbia River and the Swedish loggers and their families who moved there to work in the timber industry. They helped supply the demand for wood products to the growing cities on the West Coast. The author, a native Swede, emigrated to Oregon in 1986, but returned to Sweden permanently in 2015. For more information about the book, see <http://votumforlag.se/produkt/skogshuggarna-i-fjarran-vastern/>

Augustana Heritage Association

Holds Final Meeting

The Augustana Heritage Association held its final, valedictory meeting on June 24-26, 2016, at Lansdale, Pennsylvania. The association has held these gatherings every other year since 1998, though the organization did not officially form until 2000. The purpose of the Augustana Heritage Association was to define, promote, and perpetuate the heritage of the Augustana Lutheran Church (1860-1962), which through mergers is now part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Though the organization plans to cease operations at the end of 2016, the association's archives and materials will be maintained by the ELCA archives. For further information, see www.augustanaheritage.org.

Swedish American Museum

Celebrates 40 Years

Clark Street in the Andersonville neighborhood of Chicago was one of the most populated Swedish immigrant communities in the United States. Today the Swedish presence remains prominently visible in the midst of one of the most multicultural sections of any major American city. At its center stands the Swedish American Museum, welcoming visitors to a rich cultural experience of exhibits,



programs, and education. It all began in 1976 in a small storefront log cabin on this busy street, inviting and gathering family

history and artifacts. Through the leadership of Kurt Mattiasson, Selma Jacobson, and the generosity and labor of many others, the Lind Hardware Building was purchased and the museum's permanent home—with its exhibition space, children's museum, library with genealogical resources, and store—began to unfold in 1987. Since the beginning, more than a million visitors have explored the museum and attended its programs. About 250,000 children have benefited from its language and cultural opportunities.

The anniversary of the museum, including its Brunk Children's Museum (15 years), will be celebrated at its annual fundraising event on Saturday, November 5, at Cathedral Hall of the University Club in Chicago, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The "Ruby Gala" includes a silent auction, dinner, and dance. Information regarding the evening and reservations may be found at www.swedishamericanmuseum.org. SAHS has enjoyed collaborative work with the museum, and has been the beneficiary of its hospitality through the decades. The Society extends its warm appreciation and hearty congratulations!

Society News

Annika Safstrom Joins SAHS as Office Manager

The Society welcomes Annika Safstrom, who assumed her duties in April, succeeding Karin Andersson in the position of office manager. Karin served for more than six years, and SAHS expresses to her its gratitude and well wishes.

Annika came to Chicago from Seattle to attend North Park University. She graduated in 2007 and began a career in physical therapy, working most recently for Illinois Bone and Joint Institute until 2015 when she and her husband welcomed their daughter, Kjerstin. Annika grew up in a Swedish-American family, treasuring the history, traditions, and values instilled by her grandparents. She is looking forward to being part of and contributing to SAHS.

New Society Website

The Swedish-American Historical Society has launched a new website for the organization, one that will be easier for visitors to navigate and from which to get news, order books, register for events, join the Society, renew memberships, and make donations. The website address remains the same, at www.swedishamericanhist.org. Many thanks to the committee that worked diligently to revise the website, including Society office manager Annika Safstrom, archivist Anna-Kajsa Anderson, board member Hauna Ondrey, and designer Chris Brown. Please visit the website and notice the changes!

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Board vice chair, Ronald Johnson
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President, Philip J. Anderson
Treasurer, Donald E. Olson

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