

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter / November 2013

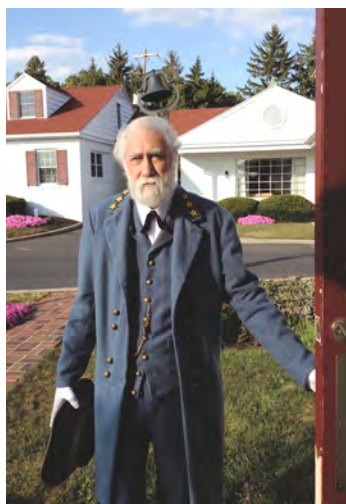


Society Gettysburg trip: Experiencing history first-hand

By Eloise V. Nelson

Lovely fall weather and the lush green hills of southern Pennsylvania greeted members of the Swedish-American Historical Society who attended an enlightening weekend in Gettysburg Sept. 20-22. Significantly, this year marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

The first event for the 26 participants (above) was a social time and tour of General Robert E. Lee's headquarters, offered by our hotel, the Quality Inn at Lee's Headquarters. This included a surprise visit from "Robert E. Lee," who compellingly described incidents from the Confederate side. His wife, "Mary," told of her sad year of having to flee from one place to another. We then followed Lee into the small house he had used as his headquarters, with its fine collection of Civil War artifacts.



The Quality Inn is on an historic property on the north edge of town where tourist cabins were originally built by a family named Larson. Today the hotel's one-story U-shaped layout reflects this history while offering high-quality accommodations and amenities. It was conveniently located across the road from the battlefield, Seminary Ridge, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, where much of our weekend was centered.

Our first dinner meeting was held in the seminary refectory. Our speaker was John Spangler, who related "Stories from a Seminary on the Front-lines of Religion

and Civic Life." A seminary administrator, he had been a planning director for the newly opened Seminary Ridge Museum, which we would visit the next afternoon.

Located in the original Lutheran Seminary building from Civil War times, this new museum opened on July 1, exactly 150 years to the day that the battle of Gettysburg began. The seminary's cupola was used by Union Gen. John Buford as he surveyed the beginnings of the battle. The building was briefly overtaken by the Confederate side, then by the Union side, finally becoming a makeshift hospital.



Saturday morning and afternoon were spent at the Gettysburg battlefield (above). Participants first watched an impressive 21-minute film, "A New Birth of Freedom," viewed the stunning Cyclorama, with its life-like panorama of the battle with gunfire sounds and smoke, then had time to view other museum exhibits, browse in the expansive gift shop, and have lunch in the cafeteria.

A two-hour guided bus tour in the afternoon took the group around the historic fields of the battlefield, past notable areas such as Little Round Top and the site of Pickett's Charge, while stopping at battle sites and monuments.

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Glen Brolander awarded Carl Sandburg Medal

Glen Brolander of Stillwater, MN, has been awarded the Swedish-American Historical Society's Carl Sandburg Medal for his contributions to the Society and the Swedish-American community. The medal was presented Sept. 15 at a dinner gathering of Society officers and family members at the Brolanders' retirement community.

Brolander was a director of the Society from 1973 to 1988, except for one year, and its eighth president from 1982-84. He also is a former chairman of the Swedish Council of America and a former president of the Augustana Chapter of the American Scandinavian Association.

Previous honors include Knight First Class of the Swedish Order of the North Star in 1979, Swedish Vasa Order Swedish-American of the Year in 1998, and Swedish Council of America Great Achievement Award last year.

Former vice president and business manager of Augustana College, he is the author of *An Historical Survey of the Augustana College Campus* (Augustana Historical Society, 1992). He discovered on a trip to Sweden in 1972 that he was related to a branch of the Swedish noble family Uggla.

Previous recipients of the Sandburg medal include Vilas Johnson, founder and first president of the Society; Conrad Bergendoff, Selma Jacobson, Franklin Scott, Nils William Olsson, Wesley Westerberg, Sten Carlson, Emeroy Johnson, Emory Lindquist, Nils Hasselmo, Arnold Barton, Eric Lund, Ulf Beijbom, Philip Anderson, Eloise and LeRoy Nelson, Ronald Johnson, Byron Nordstrom, Bruce Karstadt and Kevin Proescholdt.

Book news

'Swedes in Canada' book coming in the spring

From **Elinor Barr** in Thunder Bay, Ont.: "The University of Toronto Press has OK'd the title *Swedes in Canada: Invisible Immigrants* for my forthcoming book, and has asked for information for their spring catalogue. So it looks as though the book will be available in the spring of 2014."

The book is the culmination of years of work by Elinor, a former Society board member. The 1981 Census of Canada reported 236,660 people who claimed Swedish descent, most of them living west of Lake Superior. More than 175 place names in Canada are of Swedish origin.

Board member **James E. Holst** has added illustrations, notes and appendices to *Livsrön* (Life's Observations), *the Autobiography of Pastor N.J. Lindqvist*, translated by Stina M. Dufour. It was published originally in Swedish in weekly installments in *Missions-Wänner* (*Mission Friend*) between Dec. 31, 1946, and Aug. 12, 1947. Lindqvist, a pioneer Mission Covenant Church pastor, was Holst's grandfather, serving churches in California, Washington, Minnesota and Kansas.



**Eric Lund (left) and Philip Anderson (right)
present the Sandburg Medal to Glen Brolander.**

People in the news

Willow Hagans steps down as Swedish Council chair

Willow Hagans of Detroit has stepped down after three years as board chair of the Swedish Council of America and has accepted a new role as chair of the governance and nominating committee. Succeeding her as board chair is **Barry Peterson** of Vancouver, WA. Willow is co-author with her husband Bill of *Zorn in America*, published by SAHS.

The latest issue of *Sweden & America*, the quarterly publication of the Swedish Council and the Swedish American Center in Karlstad, features an article by **Nils Hasselmo**, "My Discovery of America," based on his keynote address at the Swedish Council's spring meeting in Tucson.

Larry (Lars) Scott retired in May after more than 30 years of teaching Scandinavian studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, IL. He was also co-director of the Augustana summer school in Grebbestad, Sweden, and is the author of *The Swedish Texans*, published in 1990.

Scott Erickson spoke Oct. 15 at North Park University on "David Nyvall at 150: The Founding President's Impact at North Park." Scott is in his third year as head of school at the Phillips Brook School in Menlo Park, CA. A past Society board member, he previously served as a school director at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

Board member **Mark Safstrom**, who teaches at the University of Illinois, is secretary of the Association of Swedish Teachers and Researchers in America.

Newsletter editor: Eric Lund

Society Gettysburg trip: Experiencing history first-hand

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The guide clearly described the three days of the Gettysburg battle, fought from various ridges, as both sides added troops daily. It finally culminated in the Confederates retreating and conceding to the Union. Our evening dinner meeting took place at a dining venue adjacent to our hotel. Our speaker was Maria Erling, Society board member and professor of modern church history and global mission at the Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Speaking on “Christians and Slavery,” she explained how the various church bodies and Lutheran synods had differing views on slavery during the Civil War era, all based on their interpretations of the Bible. The Swedish-American Augustana Synod, and the Rev. T. N. Hasselquist, who was influential in the founding of this synod, were anti-slavery, while several other groups of Christians were pro-slavery or divided on the issue.

The Gettysburg battle July 1-3 was the most decisive of the Civil War and the bloodiest, claiming 51,000 casualties.



On Nov. 19, Abraham Lincoln delivered his 273-word address to thousands of people at the dedication of the National Cemetery of Gettysburg, eloquently connecting the sacrifices of the Civil War to “a new birth of freedom.”

Eloise Nelson is vice chair of the Society board and chair of the program committee. She and her husband, LeRoy, have led Society tours since the 1970s.

Nov. 9 concert at North Park honors Ingrid and Gösta Bergström

A concert in memory of Ingrid and Gösta Bergström, long-time supporters of Chicago’s Swedish-American community, was scheduled for Nov. 9 at North Park University.

The performers: Annika Bäckström, soprano, and her father, Lennart Bäckström, baritone, in a program of Scandinavian, German, English and Sephardic songs and arias accompanied by piano, classical guitar and harp.

The Bergströms, former owners of the Sweden Shop on Foster Avenue, were regular participants in Society events. Ingrid was the author of *Ingrid: My Swedish-American Life and Adventures*, published by the Society and one of its best-selling books.

New in the Archives *Selma Jacobson, eight other collections are added*

In December 2012, Verdandi Lodge, I.O.S., gave the archives an unsolicited and unrestricted gift of \$2,000, which was matched in April by the Society board for the purpose of hiring an intern to address the archives’ Chicago manuscript processing backlog.

Former intern Janet Leu was hired for the 250-hour project and processed 22.1 cubic feet of material, adding to four existing collections (American Daughters of Sweden, Independent Order of Svithiod, Independent Order of Vikings and Svithiod Singing Club) and creating nine new collections:

The Selma Jacobson papers.
Gotland Society records.
Hallands-Förbundet records.
Nordstjernen Singing Club records.
Scandinavian Fraternity of America records.
Skåne Club records.
Smålands-Förbundet records.
Svenska Gillet records.
Vasa Order of America records.

Augustana conference looks at ‘Indians and Immigrants’

On Oct. 4-5, the Swenson Swedish Immigration Center at Augustana College, Rock island, IL, sponsored an interesting conference on “Indians and Immigrants: Entangled Histories.” The conference began with the 2013 O. Fritiof Ander Lecture in Immigration History by Gunlög Fur of Linnaeus University, Sweden, on Friday night. This was followed by a day of presentations by U.S. and Swedish scholars on Saturday.

Claes H. Jacobson, author of “Rosebud Sioux: A Lakota People in Transition,” was the final speaker on 19th Century Swedish immigrant photographers, like John Anderson, who lived and worked on the Rosebud reservation for 45 years. Jacobson’s presentation preceded a guided tour of an exhibit of Anderson’s photographs at the Augustana Art Museum.

In the next Quarterly

The forthcoming October issue of the *Quarterly* includes two feature articles, “In Treacherous Waters: Two Ships and a Rendezvous with Infamy,” by Brian B. Magnusson, and “A Visit with Eric Jansson’s Son in Sacramento California, 1915,” by James M. Kaplan. The issue also includes a book review, Swedish-American bibliography for 2012, and *Quarterly* index for 2013.

An idea for Christmas

Searching for something to give to a Swedish-American family member or friend? A membership in the Swedish-American historical Society is a perfect gift. Either call 773-244-5295 or go to www.swedishamericanhist.org.

“Quote, unquote”

*Society books a treasure trove
of good writing, information*

The Society over the years has published 29 books providing a treasure trove of good writing and information. Listings of these and related books can be found on the inside back cover of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* and on the Society's web page, swedishamericanhist.org.

Following are paragraphs from several of the books.

“Bishop Hill was drowsing under a warm summer sun. My imagination carried me easily from the scene which lay before me to the same village street in 1850, when colonists who knew only a few words of English were there. It was not difficult to see, swinging down a rutted lane, the figure of Eric Jansson, the wheat flour salesman who ignited several of Sweden's northern provinces with his passionate beliefs. Twelve hundred sober countrymen left everything they had known and loved in their native fields to follow this man on the antic adventure he proposed. Some of the very buildings constructed by the colonists survive as though their builders had just left — the Steeple building, with its single hour hand, the Bjorklund hotel, the harness shop, and several others. Some of the objects worn shiny by their hands are preserved in cases on the first floor of the Colony Church.” Preface, **Wheat Flour Messiah: Eric Jansson of Bishop Hill**, by Paul Elmen, 1976.

“Here endeth the partial lesson of my life and associations. As an immigrant I can still say that I am glad that my father brought me to America. Once in a class at Yale, for some cultural reason, we touched upon the subject of conservatism versus radicalism, I taking the conservative side. When I was through with my remarks, a foreign-born student immediately burst out in substance: ‘What do you know about it? I came over in steerage!’ In rebuttal, I could truthfully answer, ‘So did I.’” **Farm, Forge and Philosophy: Chapters of a Swedish Immigrant's Life in America**, by Adolph Burnett Benson, 1961.

It's a fact

Minnesota has had nine governors of Swedish descent, starting with John Lind in 1898. Others were John Johnson, Adolph Eberhart, J.A.A. Burnquist, Luther Youngdahl, C. Elmer Anderson, Harold LeVander, Wendell Anderson and, most recently, Arne Carlson in 1990.

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