

# SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America*

Newsletter / April 2016

April 30th event at St. James Cathedral in Chicago

## *175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Unonius Emigration*

In 1841, the educated government clerk from Uppsala, Sweden, Gustaf Elias Marius Unonius, received permission to emigrate from Sweden. Leading a small group of family members and friends, he traveled to and settled at Pine Lake, Wisconsin, just west of modern-day Milwaukee. The 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event will be celebrated in part at our April 30<sup>th</sup> event at St. James Cathedral in Chicago.



Gustaf Unonius

Unonius played a very significant role in the subsequent stream of Swedes migrating to North America, and in the early years of Swedish America, particularly in Chicago. His "America Letters" sent back to Sweden, some of which appeared in Swedish newspapers, such as the influential Stockholm daily newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, had much to do with awakening a desire to emigrate in the Swedish people.

Unonius and many of his fellow settlers at Pine Lake were not well-suited to the rigors of pioneer life, and the colony did not last very long. But many of the early Swedish emigrants were inspired by Unonius' letters, including Peter Cassel and his party in 1845. The Cassel group had planned to join Unonius at Pine Lake, but heard once they arrived in New York that better government land was available in Iowa. So even though the Cassel group did not join Pine Lake, it traveled to southeastern Iowa instead and founded the New Sweden, Iowa, settlement.

Gustaf Unonius attended the newly-formed Episcopal Church's Nashotah Seminary, and was ordained as a minister in the Episcopal Church. He felt that the Episcopal Church in America mostly closely matched the Swedish Lutheran Church, and he hoped to encourage the trickle of Swedish immigrants then arriving in America to join the

Episcopal Church instead of any of the Lutheran synods in America. But the birth and growth of the Augustana Lutheran Synod after 1860 saw those plans go by the wayside.

After his graduation from Nashotah Seminary in 1845 (he was its first graduate), Unonius served as a priest in the Episcopal Church. In 1848 he moved to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where he served as the first Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church there. But he remained in Manitowoc only about a year.

In 1849, Unonius and his family moved to Chicago, where he formed St. Ansgarius Episcopal Church, the first Swedish church of any denomination in that city. His work in founding and serving St. Ansgarius Church will also be celebrated in the April 30<sup>th</sup> event. During his years in Chicago, Unonius served not only the St. Ansgarius Church, but the broader and growing Swedish immigrant community. He occasionally sparred with the pastors of the Augustana Lutheran Synod during his years in Chicago.

In 1858, Unonius and his family returned to Sweden after living in the United States for 17 years. There he lived until his death in 1902.

But soon after his return to Sweden, Unonius wrote a two-volume memoir of his years in America entitled *Minnen från en Sjuttonårig Vistelse i Nordvästra Amerika* (*Memoir from a 17-year Stay in Northwestern America*) that came out in 1861 and 1862. This significant memoir from the early part of the great nineteenth-century migration has long been recognized as one of the most important books on the topic. It was so important that publishing an English translation of Unonius' books became the first book publication project for the Swedish-American Historical Society (then the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society). The two translated volumes came out in 1950 and 1960 as *A Pioneer in Northwest America, 1841-1858: The Memoirs of Gustaf Unonius*.

Please see page 4 for information about the program.

## News of members

### *Anita Olson Gustafson Named Dean*

Presbyterian College historian and academic administrator Dr. Anita Olson Gustafson has been named as dean of Mercer University's College of Liberal Arts, the institution's oldest and largest academic unit, effective 1 July 2016. Mercer University is located in Macon, Georgia. In addition to serving as professor of history at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, since 1997, Anita also held terms as interim provost from 2010-2012, interim dean of academic programs from 2005-2007, and chair of the history department from 2000-2004. Anita also has served on the board of directors of the Swedish-American Historical Society, and continues to serve on the Society's Publications Committee. Congratulations, Anita!

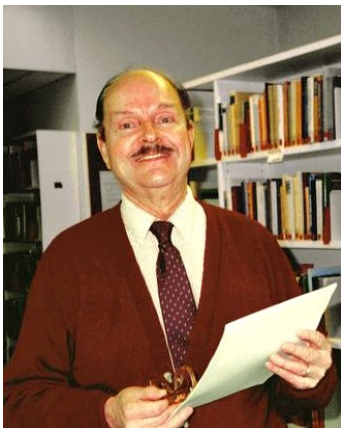
### *Mark Granquist at Rosenius Symposium, David Gustafson Lectures in Uppsala*

Society board member Mark Granquist, associate professor of history at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, participated in a symposium on Carl Olof Rosenius at Johannelund Theological School (*Johannelunds teologiska högskola*) in Uppsala, Sweden from 3-4 February 2016. The symposium was held on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rosenius' birth. Mark presented a paper at the symposium on Rosenius in America, describing the influence of the Swedish pietistic church leader on American religion both historical and contemporary, even though Rosenius himself never visited America. Society board member David Gustafson also lectured at Johannelund Theological School two weeks after the Rosenius Symposium. David is an associate professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and now also an affiliate faculty member at Johannelund.

## Obituaries

### *Former Board Member Melvin Holli Dies at 82*

Mel Holli, a noted historian and outstanding scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), died January 7 at Carol Stream, Illinois. He was 82. Mel wrote or edited 18



Melvin Holli

books during his career, many of them focusing on Chicago mayoral politics or Chicago social and cultural history. His 1983 book, *The Making of the Mayor, Chicago 1983*, focused on the contentious mayoral election that elected Harold Washington to the mayor's office. His most popular book, *Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait*, came out in 1984. Mel also was

certified as an archivist, and developed a major urban historical collection now housed at UIC's archives. Mel was long interested in ethnic history and served on the board of the Swedish-American Historical Society from 1990-1995. Mel is survived by his wife, Betsy Holli, and their daughter, Susan Swinford.

### *Former Society President Eric Lund Died Jan. 16*

Eric R. Lund, former President of the Swedish-American Historical Society and long-time board member, died Jan. 16 in Evanston, Illinois, at age 90. Eric joined the board more than 40 years ago, and served on the board most of the years since then, including a variety of leadership positions. A journalist by training and education, Eric served as the editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Evanston Review*, taught journalism at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and at North Park University, and helped build the journalism graduate school at Columbia College before his retirement in 1994. Eric's leadership of and contributions to the Swedish-American Historical Society have been enormous over the decades, including numerous articles in the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. A more complete memorial of Eric and his importance to the Society will be published in the April issue of the *Quarterly*. Eric is survived by his wife, Grace Carlson-Lund.



Eric Lund

### Andrew Peterson's Minnesota Farm Preserved

The Carver County Historical Society recently took possession of a historic farm just east of Waconia, Minnesota. The farmstead contains a number of nineteenth century buildings from Andrew Peterson, whose extensive diaries from 1855-1898 formed a foundation for Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg's famous novels, *The Emigrants*. After two years of negotiations, the Carver County Historical Society exchanged most of the 51 acres they had previously acquired, with only one building, for the 12 adjacent acres, which contain the remainder of the Peterson buildings. For more information, see [http://www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org/peterson\\_farm.php](http://www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org/peterson_farm.php). The Andrew Peterson Society (*Andrew Peterson Sällskapet*) formed in Peterson's home area around Västra Ryd Parish, Östergötland, Sweden, in order to promote interest in his life and work, and the broader emigrant story. Skilled artisans from that society have also come to Peterson's Minnesota farm to assist in the preservation of some of the buildings. For more information, see <http://www.andrewpeterson.se/web/sv>.



## Book News

### Swedish Pietists and Waldenström

Dr. Mark Safstrom from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has recently published two books of interest to our members. In the first, *Swedish Pietists: A Reader: Excerpts from the Writings of Carl Olof Rosenius and Paul Peter Waldenström*, Mark edited, translated, and introduced writings from these two towering figures in the Swedish pietistic revival that swept over Sweden in the nineteenth century. His second book, *The Religious Origins of Democratic Pluralism: Paul Peter Waldenström and the Politics of the Swedish Awakening, 1868-1917*, examines this significant church leader's extensive involvement with Swedish politics during the last half-century of his life. Both books are available from [www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com). Mark is a member of the Publications Committee and a past board member of the Swedish-American Historical Society.

### Peter Cassel Family

A new book on Peter Cassel and his family came out at the end of 2015, co-authored by *Quarterly* editor Kevin Proescholdt and former Society board member Earl Check. Peter Cassel was the leader and founder of the New Sweden, Iowa, settlement in 1845, the first Swedish settlement in that state. *Peter Cassel and His Family: Faces of Swedish America* includes biographies of Cassel and his two wives, his children, and all of his grandchildren, as well as historical information on New Sweden and Swede Point (Madrid), Iowa, the state's second Swedish settlement to which Cassel's oldest son (Carl Johan Cassel) moved in 1849. The 315-page book also includes over 150 photographs of Cassel family members. The book is available for \$25 plus \$4 shipping from Earl Check, 2003 310<sup>th</sup> St., Madrid, IA 50156.

## Swedish-American Historical Society 2015 Year-End Donors

The following 33 members contributed to the Swedish-American Historical Society's 2015 year-end fund appeal. A total of \$4,465 was contributed, which has helped the Society with its mission, publications, programs, and more heading into 2016. Thanks for your generous support!

Harry and Evelyn Anderson  
Kari Anderson  
Philip and Karna Anderson  
Rolf Anderson  
Westen Anderson  
Don Benson  
Klas Bergman  
Thomas Braniger  
James R. Brorson  
Jon Brorson  
Barbara Graves  
Jan Harrer  
Warren Hillstrom  
Ann M. Legreid  
R. Malcolm  
Carl E. Johnson  
Ronald Johnson  
Susan and Duane Kullberg  
Bruce L. Larson  
Lynn LeBeck  
Marlin R.A. Mattson  
Vernice Monson  
Gordon Nelson  
Christopher Olsson  
Gordon A. Palmer  
Ruth Ratekin  
Don Safstrom  
Mary and Bill Seeger  
Alan P. Strom  
Kevin Proescholdt and Jean Swanson  
Thomas Tredway  
Kim Eric Williams

## SPRING MEETING RESERVATION

Swedish-American Historical Society  
3225 W. Foster Avenue, Box 48  
Chicago, IL 60625-4816

Phone: (773) 583-5722  
E-mail: [kmandersson@northpark.edu](mailto:kmandersson@northpark.edu)

Please reserve \_\_\_\_ places at \$30.00 (\$15.00 for students) per person for the program and lunch April 30th.

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or charge my credit card: Visa Master Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by April 20**



## Spring meeting

The Swedish-American Historical Society will hold its spring meeting in Chicago on April 30. The program commemorates the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Gustaf Unonius to America, and in particular his founding of the St. Ansgarius Episcopal Church in Chicago in 1849. The event will be held at St. James Cathedral with an archival exhibit, a choral Eucharistic service led by the bishop of the diocese and the dean of the cathedral, a catered lunch, and an afternoon symposium. A silver chalice and paten, donated to the congregation in 1851 by

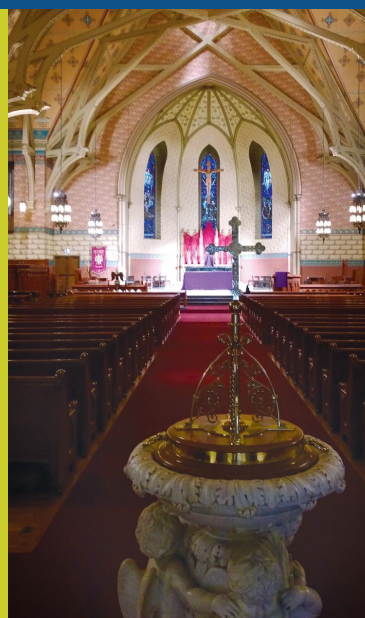
renowned Swedish singer Jenny Lind, will be used in the service. Follow the link to Eventbrite to register (\$30 or \$15 for students) (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-celebration-of-scandinavian-episcopal-life-in-early-chicago-tickets-22130020487>). You may also register using the sign-up on page 3 in this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you at this memorable, celebratory gathering, co-sponsored by the Center for Scandinavian Studies and the F. M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections, North Park University.

### A Celebration of Scandinavian Episcopal Life in Early Chicago

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 2016**



**St. James Cathedral**  
65 E. Huron Street, Chicago



#### SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 2016 - SCHEDULE

- 9:30 a.m. **WELCOME and INTRODUCTION**
- 11:00 a.m. **CHORAL EUCHARIST** with Bishop Lee and Dean Barrington
- 12:15 p.m. **LUNCH** in the Great Hall
- 1:30-4:30 p.m. **SEMINARS** on St. Ansgarius (*founded in 1849*)
- > *Gustaf Unonius, Scandinavians, and the Life of St. Ansgarius in Chicago*
- COFFEE BREAK
- > *Swedish Women Visitors, Episcopalians, and Early Chicago*

#### TICKETS

Tickets for "Scandinavian Episcopal Life" are available **HERE** at Eventbrite.com.

[Tickets are required for the lunch and seminars.]

#### PARKING

Reduced rate parking is available within walking distance of the Cathedral:  
\$9 all day parking at **Impark Garage**, 33 W Ontario. Info **HERE**.

SPONSORED BY THE SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, THE CENTER FOR SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES AT NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY AND THE F. M. JOHNSON ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

We are grateful for the support received for this event and the preservation and digitization of the records of St. Ansgarius Scandinavian Episcopal Church from the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation and the Swedish Council of America.