

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter / September 2019

SWEDES IN THE WHITE CITY

Fall Meeting to Focus on the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago

The Fall Meeting of the Swedish-American Historical Society will take place on **Saturday, October 26, 2019**, on Chicago's southside in Hyde Park, the site of the Chicago



1893 Postcard, Columbian Exposition

World's Fair commemorating the arrival of Columbus to the "New World" in 1492. We will gather in the afternoon at **Augustana Lutheran Church, 5500 South Woodlawn**, and enjoy guided bus tours from there to extant sites of the "White City" (as the vast complex of pavilions, exposition buildings from countries around the world, and amusements—such as the world's first Ferris Wheel—was known), a masterpiece of planning under the brilliant visionary, Daniel Burnham. This will be followed by a reception beginning at 5:30 and a Swedish festive dinner catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, both at the Augustana Lutheran Church.

The evening program will include a presentation by Dr. Anita Olson Gustafson entitled, "*Swedish Chicago in the 1890s: A Vibrant and Growing Community*." Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Professor of History at Mercer



Anita Olson

University in Macon, Georgia, she is an authority on the history of Swedes in Chicago, and her new book, *Swedish Chicago: The Shaping of an Immigrant Community, 1880-1920*, was the most recent book dividend sent to qualified members of the Society earlier this year. Anita has served as a board member of SAHS and is on the Publications Committee. A graduate of North Park University, she earned her Ph.D. at Northwestern University.

At the turn of the last century, through the rapid growth of immigration, the frontier town of Chicago had emerged as the nation's second largest city with more than a million inhabitants, and 10 percent of the immigrant population were Swedes—the third largest ethnic group after the Germans and the Irish. More Swedes lived in Chicago than any other city after Stockholm. Given its relative size in Chicago, Swedish-American leaders and organizations were quick to grasp the significance of the World's Fair as an opportunity to unify its various secular and religious communities as a show of force and ethnic pride. Sweden had its own pavilion championing Swedish culture, commerce, and technological innovation (a building sadly gone), and as a homeland warmly supported plans for a public display of Chicago's immigrant Swedes and their children. "Sweden Day" was on July 20 and more than 12,000 Swedish Americans marched, fifty distinct organizations were represented in the largest parade ever held by Swedes in America, and more than 30,000 gathered for evening festivities of singing and speeches in Jackson Park. The headline of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* read, "Swedes at the Fair: They Capture Jackson Park and Rule for a Day."

In addition to structures of the Columbian Exposition, such as Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry and the replica Statue of the Republic, we will also tour other historic landmarks of Swedish Chicago. Please join us for this fun and informative event. ***Please see the last page of the Newsletter for details of registration and cost.*** We look forward to seeing you on October 26th!

Spring Meeting Honors Prof. Harald Runblom with Sandburg Medal

The Spring 2019 meeting of the Swedish-American Historical Society took place on 27 April in Chicago at the Swedish American Museum. The event featured a Swedish smorgasbord catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, and Swedish spring music by the group Merula.



Professor Harald Runblom of Uppsala University was given the Carl Sandburg Medal, the highest honor of the Swedish-American Historical Society. His pioneering research interests have focused on the role of migration in history and on multicultural societies,

including immigration to Sweden, the Baltic Sea Region, and Jewish Swedish history. He also was our featured speaker for the evening, discussing Sandburg in Sweden and speaking personally about his ties to Swedish-American scholarship and life over the decades. We were delighted to host Harald and his wife, Ann, for this festive occasion.

In Memoriam: Mary Anderson Seeger

Society board member Mary Seeger died in Michigan on 11 June 2019. She was a retired dean and professor emerita of modern languages and literatures at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. Mary was 79. With her passing, our

Society and our Swedish-American community lost an articulate and passionate advocate for understanding and celebrating a common heritage within the rich diversity of American life. Her contributions to many organizations and boards extended over decades, and her wise voice and humor assured focus, insight, and action. This



was matched by her generosity to all the causes she supported and sought to advance for mutual well-being. Mary had joined the Society as a life member while pursuing her doctoral studies at the University of

Wisconsin in the 1960s and her support and years on our Board of Directors have been memorable, for which we are grateful. She was the featured speaker on Swedish crime fiction at the Spring 2018 meeting of the Society. We extend our sincere sympathy to Mary's husband, Bill Seeger. Peace to the memory of a great person and friend!

Former Board Member Frederick L. Hemke Passes Away

Long-time Swedish-American Historical Society board member Fred Hemke died on 17 April 2019 at age 83. Fred was a world-renowned American virtuoso classical saxophonist and influential professor of saxophone at Northwestern University. Fred helped raise the popularity of classical saxophone, particularly among leading American composers and helped raise the recognition of classical saxophone in solo, chamber, and major orchestral repertoire. For a half century, from 1962 to 2012, Fred was a full-time faculty music educator at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music.



In 2002, Fred was named Associate Dean Emeritus of the School of Music. Fred retired from Northwestern University in 2012. Among his many and varied activities, Fred also served on the Society's board of directors from 1986-1992, and again from 2003-2009. He is survived by his wife Junita "Nita" Borg Hemke (also a former Society board member), daughter Elizabeth Hemke Shapiro (Nicholas), son Frederic John Borg Hemke (Rachel), and grandchildren Daniel, Martin, Charlotte, and Peter. Peace over his memory!

Daron Olson Resigns as *Quarterly* Associate and Book Review Editor

Citing an increasing workload in his academic life, Dr. Daron W. Olson has resigned as the Associate and Book Review Editor of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. In addition to serving as an associate professor of history at Indiana University East, Daron also serves as Chair of World Languages and Cultures, History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. Daron has served in this *Quarterly* editorial position since 2016. Daron will continue, however, to serve on the board of

directors of the Society. A successor as Associate and Book Review Editor has not yet been named. We are very grateful for his service as the Associate Editor over these past years. Thank you, Daron!

Ola Larsmo to Give the Ander Lecture at Augustana

The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, will host its annual Ander Lecture on 12 Oct. 2019. Acclaimed Swedish novelist Ola Larsmo, author of the recent novel, *Swede Hollow*, will give the lecture this year. *Swede Hollow* tells the stories of immigrant Swedes living in the real-life Swedish immigrant neighborhood of the same name located in a ravine near downtown Saint Paul, Minnesota. An English translation of *Swede Hollow*, published by the University of Minnesota Press, will be officially launched in Minneapolis at the American Swedish Institute on 9 October. The Ander lecture series is named in honor of Dr. O. Fritiof Ander, who taught history at Augustana College from 1930 to 1968. Larsmo will also give lectures in Chicago, Seattle, and New York City. For more information about the Augustana lecture, see <https://www.augustana.edu/swenson/academic/anderlecture>.

Svensk Hyllningsfest Celebrates Lindsborg's 150th Anniversary

The 2019 Svensk Hyllningsfest celebration in Lindsborg, Kansas, will be held on the weekend of 17-19 October 2019. Occurring in October of odd numbered years, the residents of Lindsborg host a community-wide festival and don traditional Swedish folk costumes to celebrate the Swedish pioneers who settled the Smoky Valley in 1868 – 1869. The festival features art and crafts, special foods, ethnic music, and other special entertainment while Swedish folk dancers and musicians add to the flavor of the festival. Folk dancing and folk music lend a unique character and spirit to Svensk Hyllningsfest. The dancers - from eager young grade school students who have been practicing for months, to the Lindsborg Swedish Folk Dancers (high school age students) and the Lindsborg Folkdanslag (their adult counterparts) - are charming and enthusiastic performers. The festival also features live demonstrations of cooking, arts, crafts, and folk costumes among others. The parade, featuring area marching bands, floats, antique cars, and other parade entries, is a key attraction. For more information, see www.svenskhyllningsfest.org.

Newsletter editor: Phil Anderson
Production: Grace Lund

Change in Society Membership Enrollment and Renewal

As the Society's president and board chair informed members by letter in May, the board decided at its April 27, 2019, meeting to simplify the Society's membership enrollment and renewal processes.

During the 2019 transition year:

- **Current members scheduled to renew before April 30**, have been reminded to renew for 2019 and will be invited beginning September 2019 to renew for 2020.
- **Current members scheduled to renew after May 1**, will be invited beginning September 2019 to renew for 2020.
- **New members joining before April 30**, contribute for the whole of 2019 and will be invited beginning September 2019 to renew for 2020.
- **New members joining after May 1**, receive membership for the remainder of 2019 and all of 2020 before coming up for renewal.

Beginning January 1, 2020:

- **Current members** will receive renewal notices for the next calendar year during September; those not responding will be reminded one month later; and, finally, remaining non-respondents will be notified in January that the January *Quarterly* will be their last unless they renew by March 1.
- **New members joining June 30 and before**, contribute for the whole of the current year and will be invited beginning the following September to renew for the next year.
- **New members joining after July 1** receive membership for the remainder of the current year and the full next calendar year before coming up for renewal.

Welcoming new members each month and tracking that month as their renewal date has long been burdensome. The simplified membership processes promise (a) a more manageable office workload, (b) reduced occasions for error, and (c) better coordinated Society communications. Board members hope you value these advantages and thank you for continuing to support our mutual efforts to chart the history of the Swedish experience in America.

Questions? Please contact Office Manager Maria Ward via e-mail (info@swedishamericanhist.org) or phone (773-583-5722).

Archivist Andy Meyer Reports Generous SCA Grant

This year, the F.M. Johnson Archives and Special Collections received a grant from Swedish Council of America to hire a project archivist to improve and expand access to the Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago. The primary goals of the project were to migrate existing finding aids to the archive's new administrative and user interface, update and strengthen existing finding aids, and finally, to promote the collections by partnering with the Chicago Collections Consortium.

Archives staff migrated finding aids to the new system and student workers completed a detailed shelf inventory to ensure findability of the materials. Gretchen Stroner, an archivist hired for this project, improved the finding aids in many ways. Most notably, she created additional access points by adding local name authorities and applying Library of Congress Subject Headings for the Chicago neighborhoods associated with each collection.

Lastly, the archives will enhance public access to these collections through a new partnership with the Chicago Collections Consortium. This consortium is a group of member institutions made up of libraries, museums, and

archives in the Chicago area who have brought their collections together to allow searchers to search collections simultaneously and to discover resources city wide, despite being held in various cultural heritage institutions. This partnership will allow the Swedish American Archives of Greater Chicago promote our rich collections and reach a wider audience.

As archivist, I wish to thank the Swedish-American Historical Society for its continued support of the archives and offer a special word of thanks to Swedish Council of America for this grant that improved and enhanced access to these collections.

Finally, the F.M. Johnson Archives at Brandel Library, North Park University, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that will fund audio-visual experts to come and access the archive's AV material, create a technical detailed inventory of the film collections, and fund the purchase of archival quality film cans and cores to ensure long-term preservation. The Society's Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago is included in this important and time-sensitive project regarding historical materials easily subject to deterioration over time. A more detailed report will follow in the next issue of the newsletter.

Fall Meeting Registration

Swedish-American Historical Society
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Chicago, IL 60625-4816

Phone: (773) 244-5592
E-mail: info@swedishamericanhist.org

Please reserve _____ places at \$60 per person for the afternoon tour, the dinner catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, and program following. Tours leave from **Augustana Lutheran Church, 5500 South Woodlawn in Hyde Park**. The reception, dinner and program will also take place at Augustana Lutheran Church.

Please indicate your choice of time for the tour: 1:00 PM _____ or 2:30 PM _____

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 Friday, October 18th