

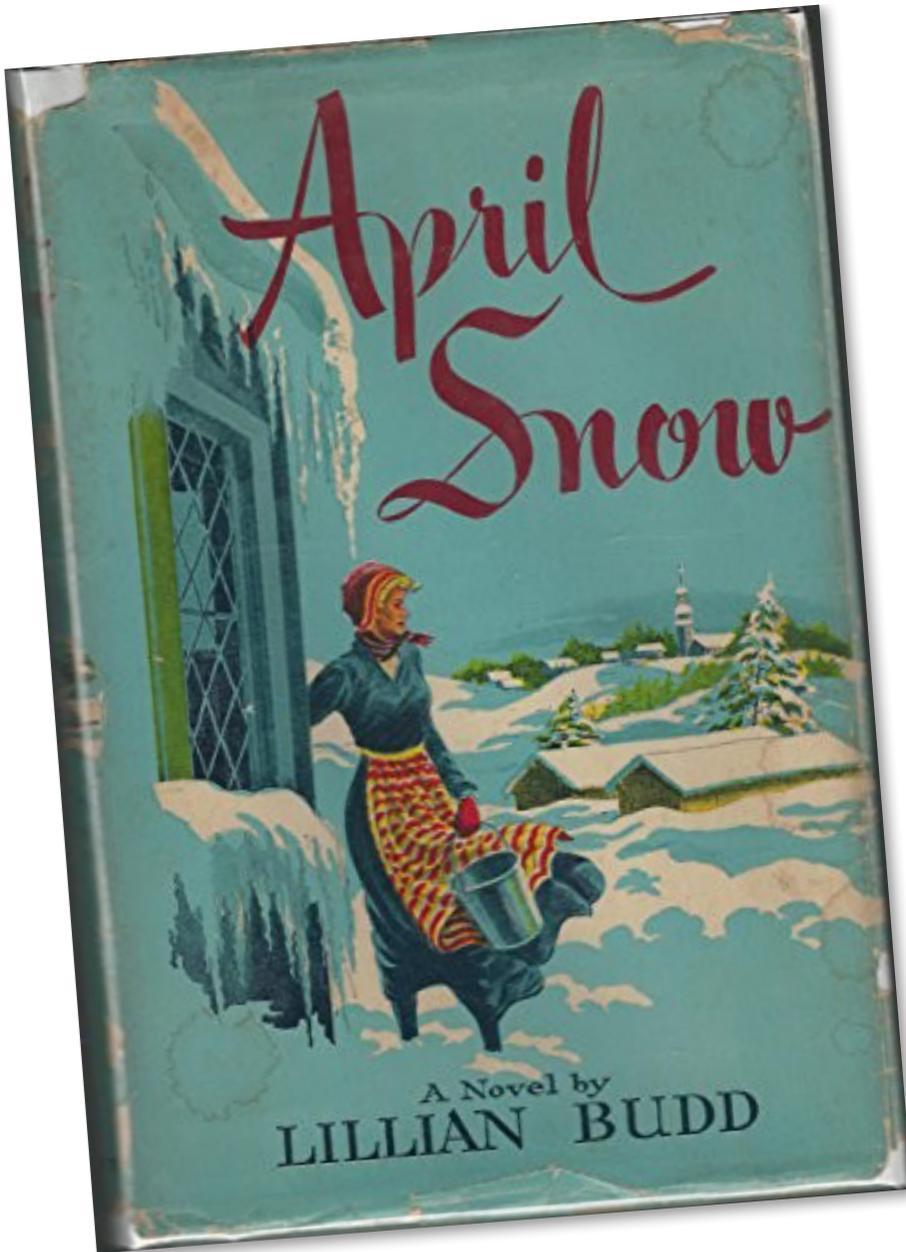


Glimtar

NOVEMBER 2025

The Newsletter of the Swedish-American Historical Society

SWEDISH-
AMERICAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



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News from the Society

A New Wave of Swedish Emigrant Novels

Ulf Jonas Björk

The mass migration of Swedes to North America that began in the 19th century is newly inspiring Swedish authors and their readers in the first quarter of our century. The emigration was an exodus of nearly 1.3 million Swedes to North America from the 1840s to the 1920s, making emigration a central part of everyday life in Sweden. Most people around 1900 knew someone—friends, relatives or former neighbors—who had left for America. While the first generation of Swedish-American authors such as journalist Johan Person made the immigration experience a central theme of their Swedish-language fictional works, their counterparts in Sweden were slow to explore the topic, and not until Vilhelm Moberg's epic four-novel *Emigrants* cycle, written between 1947 and 1957 (published by Bonniers, 1949-1959), did a major Swedish work deal with the exodus.



Wilhelm Moberg, 1967.

Moberg's novels, long required reading in Swedish schools, made a deep impression in Sweden, and Swedish emigration to America as a literary theme was given a further boost a half century later by another well-received book, Ola Larsmo's *Swede Hollow*, published in 2016 by Bonniers. In contrast to Moberg's characters, who come to America early in the history of the mass migration and end up as successful farmers, Larsmo's protagonists arrive in the latter half of the 1800s and live in a slum in St. Paul, Minnesota, struggling to make ends meet. *Swede Hollow* thus added a new dimension to Swedish perceptions of the emigration. As Jennifer Eastman Attebery notes in her companion article, the English translation of Moberg's work extended his impact to American authors and readers, and the same may be true of Larsmo's translation to English.

Several recent Swedish books have chosen Swedish America as a topic and have picked up Larsmo's theme of Swedish immigrants as city dwellers rather than farmers. Two authors make their protagonists young single women rather than focusing on families as Moberg's and Larsmo's novels do, reflecting that those opting for a new life in America in the later stages of the great-migration era tended to arrive on their own. Camilla Dahlson's two books, *Från Tranås till Chicago* (From Tranås to Chicago; Lind & Co., 2023) and *Ebba och Mary* (Ebba and Mary; Lind & Co., 2024), tell the story of Ebba, who travels to Chicago from Sweden in the 1920s and finds work as a housemaid. Like many real-life immigrants, Dahlson's heroine is torn between her new homeland and the country of her birth, seeking out Swedish-American organizations and fellowship to deal with her longing for home.

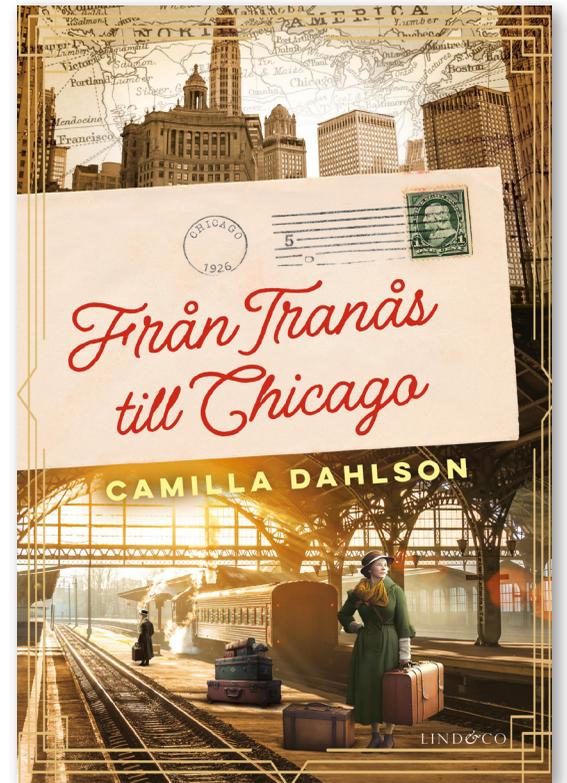
As its title implies, Maria Bouroncle's *Drömmen om Chicago* (The Dream of Chicago; Saga-Egmont, 2024) is also set in the Illinois metropolis that attracted so many Swedish-Americans. Bouroncle's protagonist, Elsa, is also a young single woman arriving from Sweden, but she settles for office work, at the US Post Office, rather than maid service. Unlike Ebba, Elsa eventually returns to Sweden, despite being engaged to a well-off American. While Dahlson's characters are altogether fictional, Bouroncle draws on real-life events and persons for her story.

Both *Från Tranås till Chicago* and *Drömmen om Chicago* stress that life in America involves hard work and economic hardship for the protagonists, although both women eventually find a measure of success. The image of the United States as the land of plenty is also challenged in Ingela E. Larsson's *Drömmarnas vind* (The Wind of Dreams; Digging Deep, 2022). This novel is really about the life of a farmer's wife in Blekinge in Sweden (a great-great-grandmother of Larsson's), but emigration enters the narrative because four of Elin Hansdotter's five sons leave for America. Using real letters from the sons to their mother to tell the sons' stories, Larsson offers an account where life across the Atlantic is marred by illness, death, and ever-present financial worries.

A fourth Swedish author to use America as a setting for novels is Martin Eaglechild, whose two novels *Där björken rotat sig* (Where the Birch Has Taken Root; Books on Demand, 2021) and *Landet bortom det stora vattnet* (The Land Beyond the Great Water; Books on Demand, 2021) tells the story of Gabriel Johanneson, a young man from northern Sweden who arrives in the United States in 1865. The story's initial chapters depict Gabriel's encounter with relatives and with a Swedish-American community in Iowa, but the search for a lost cousin soon shifts the setting to the western frontier and life among Native American tribes and warriors, making the novels read more like an old-style "Indian book" that was popular in Scandinavia in the late 1800s.

As the books of these four authors suggest, emigration from Sweden to America remains a topic that fascinates both writers and readers in Sweden.

Ulf Jonas Björk is Visiting Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, where he also works in the Swenson Center collections. His research concerns Swedish and Swedish-American popular culture, journalism, and literature.



Från Tranås till Chicago, by Camilla Dahlson.

Swedish-American Fictions, This Side of the Atlantic

Jennifer Eastman Attebery

As Ulf Jonas Björk notes in his companion article, the history of Swedish migration to North America has inspired renewed interest among Swedish readers during the first quarter of the 21st century. We can point to a similar pattern of enthusiasm in Swedish America that can be traced to the middle of the 20th century. This pattern of historical fiction writing on both sides of the Atlantic bears the influence of a trans-Atlantic writer, Vilhelm Moberg, whose famed *Emigrants* tetralogy was published in Sweden during 1949-1959, translated for English readers in 1951-1961, and had further influence through film and later musical productions.

Moberg straddled the Atlantic. He was Swedish, but his writing was based on American sources, including his own experience of Swedish America, and even though he spent most of his career in Sweden he wrote the *Emigrants* tetralogy while living in the US.

But Moberg wasn't the only writer to address American audiences. Writing at the same time as Moberg, Midwestern writer Lillian Budd produced a trilogy *April Snow* that came out in 1951-1959 (published by J.B. Lippincott Co. and Duell, Sloan, and Pearce). Budd follows protagonists Carl and Ellen from Sweden to Chicago, where their challenges mirror many documentable experiences in urban ethnic neighborhoods. (For more about Budd's work, see my article "Heritage Fiction and Folk Narratives: The Swedish-American Example of Lillian Budd" in *Swedish-American Studies* Volume 76 [2025].) Did Moberg and Budd know of each others' writing? So far, no evidence has emerged to prove so. We can say, though, that something was in the air inspiring both writers—the passing of the earliest immigrant generations, the formation of Swedish-American societies, the formation of the Emigrant Institute in Växjö, Sweden, and the emergence of an ethnic revival in the United States.

We see the seeds sown by Moberg and Budd bear fruit on this side of the Atlantic beginning in the 1980s as Swedish Americans writing in English take up the theme of Swedish migration to America. Moberg's focus on rural settler colonialist patterns in Midwestern America has been followed up by writers like Janet Beeler Shaw in the 1980s-1990s *Kirsten* children's books for the Pleasant Company

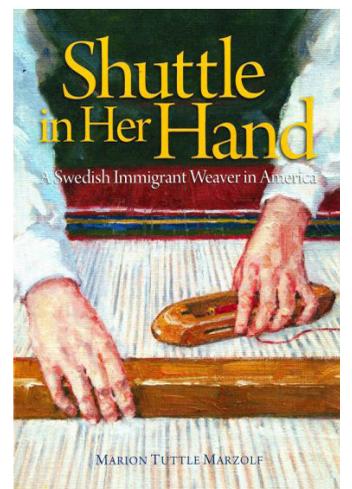
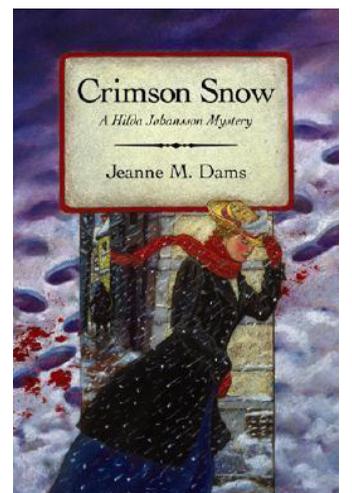
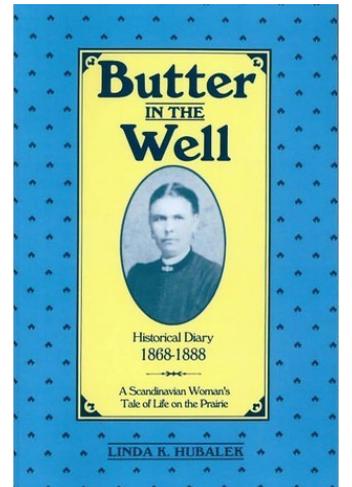
and Linda K. Hubalek in her *Butter in the Well* series (Butterfield Books, 1992-1994) and *Planting Dreams* series (Butterfield Books, 1997-1999), both set in Kansas.

Budd's focus on migration to cities has been followed up by writers like Jeanne M. Dams in her *Hilda Johansson* series (Walker and Co., 1999-2011), Lynn N. Austin in *Until We Reach Home* (Bethany House, 2008), and Marion Tuttle Marzolf in *Shuttle in Her Hand: A Swedish Immigrant Weaver in America* (Swedish-American Historical Society, 2010). In Lois Walfrid Johnson's *Adventures of the Northwoods* children's book series (Bethany House, 1990-1994), Johnson pays attention to both rural and urban Swedish settlement patterns as she takes her Swedish-American/ Irish-American central character Katherine O'Connell from the streets of Minneapolis to a northwestern Wisconsin farmstead in the Trade Lake area, where we meet the legendary marshal Big Gust.

These late 20th century/early 21st century American writers expanded the concerns of migration-based historical fiction to focus on women migrants' lives, urban settings, and religious concerns—all themes more strongly developed by Budd than by Moberg. With Dams' central character Hilda Johansson, for example, we learn about the circumstances of Swedish maids as Hilda works for the Studebakers of South Bend, Indiana. Her experiences revolve around work responsibilities that constrain her personal life and supportive Swedish-American institutions available in her urban environs. Women's work is celebrated in many of these novels, for example in Marzolf's talented weaver Lisa Lindholm, a character strongly paralleling the skilled craftsperson Sigrid in Budd's trilogy. Some of these works are silent about migrant religious life, but most foreground Christianity and social justice, especially in writings by Hubalek, Austin, and Johnson. These authors' Swedish-American works fit within their larger opus of book series in which protagonists are guided by Christian ethics, a subgenre of historical fiction that has gained popularity with American readers in recent decades.

For those interested in the Swedish-American past, the recent spate of historical fictions offers very good reading. Most of these works are well researched, providing a reasonably accurate picture of migrant experiences. We should always be aware, though, that these are fictions, and authors have imaginative license to invent and extrapolate where there are gaps in the evidence. And, fiction is always an interpretation filtered through writers' ideologies and interests. Each gives us a slightly different, nonetheless valuable, window into the Swedish-American past.

Jennifer Eastman Attebery is Professor Emerita, English, at Idaho State University. Her current research focuses on legends and literature, including the use of historical legends in Swedish-American historical fiction.



For those interested in the Swedish-American past, the recent spate of historical fictions offers very good reading.

SAHS Member Reflection: The Value of Swedish Networks

Philip Friedlund

I am well travelled in Sweden and have many friends there. This valuable network has developed through hosting many Swedes over the years for homestays. In June 2025, I added to these experiences by participating in the Minneapolis American Swedish Institute Male Chorus's 10-concert, 18-day tour. My roommate on the tour was someone whom I've known for many years with the American Union of Swedish Singers (AUSS), which has national conventions every three years. He lives in Vermont and immigrated from Sweden as a child. We found we had many similar interests and a mutual network of Swedish friends. Consequently, we feel like brothers, both of us strong supporters of our heritage and proud of it.

The chorus began the tour in Stockholm in early June and ended in Luleå for Midsommar. Our first concert was at Hedvig Eleanora church with Akademiska Kören (AK) of Stockholm joining us. I am friends with several members of AK and their director, having sung and *skåled* with them over the years. Besides the concert, I took a tour with a professional guide of Gamla Stan and the Stockholm City Hall. The behind-the-scenes tour of the Royal Opera house with a member of the company was memorable. Taking the tunnelbana to a Stockholm suburb, I took a long nature walk with a 30-year friend and AK member, which included visiting a garden colony. We have exchanged homestays in the past. His wife prepared a lovely dinner and we caught up on family news. Another close friend flew into Stockholm from Göteborg for our four days there. He had first come to our home as a foreign exchange student in 2011-2012, and we have stayed in close touch over the years. He seems like my Swedish son.

While in Sala, which is near Uppsala, I met many friends and family after our concert. I discovered that a house guest of mine, who was a folk dancer at Uppsala University, works at the post office in Sala with my cousin's wife. As with so many others, we have become like relatives. The trip to Mora included a stop at Nusnäs to visit the Dala Horse museum. Memories came back of a business trip there during which the staff, finding that I was from America, asked if I could help them find a job. My child Fae accompanied me on that visit and enjoyed learning to carve a horse and riding the large horse on display. In Mora I recalled a trip to the Zorn Museum on my honeymoon. Zorn was my grandfather's favorite Swedish artist. I also remembered purchasing a Vasalopet bumper sticker that I proudly displayed on my car in the US.



PHOTO: Unsplash.com

In Gävle I met a longtime friend who has come to many of the AUSS conventions. He and his wife were our hosts, gave us a grand tour of Gävle, hosted us at a party with their choir friends, and sang to us at their concert. There I learned that the now former organist from Uppsala cathedral who had homestayd with me is currently the organist in Gävle at the church we performed in. Unfortunately he was on vacation. I had time to visit the recently restored train museum and walk through another colony garden.

Finally, we arrived in Luleå for several days of concerts and a celebration of Midsommar. This was my fourth visit to Luleå. My visits have often included homestays there, so there were many hugs to greet me when I arrived. There, I met a friend and professional opera singer who homestayd with me when he was a student at Stockholm opera school. This visit included a second trip to the Luleå railroad museum with another friend. I have had a long fascination with railroads since my childhood. The museum presents a unique regional history since Luleå was the shipping port for Swedish iron.

All of the trip included concerts at many of the magnificent historic churches and cathedrals of Sweden. Much can be learned about the Swedish people through visits to and in-depth exposure to the art and architecture of the buildings and how the people have interacted with the buildings. Added to it is now a vocal imprint within the walls of the churches from our concerts there.

Philip Friedlund of St. Paul, Minnesota, is a Swedish-American Historical Society board member whose involvement with the American Union of Swedish Singers includes recently serving as AUSS president.

Eric Dregni Explores Nordic America at SAHS Spring Gathering in Minneapolis

Carrie Danielson

There might not have been any actual Vikings in the attic of the American Swedish Institute (ASI), but there was plenty of Scandinavian spirit at the Swedish-American Historical Society's (SAHS) spring 2025 program, held in coordination with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Minneapolis last April. More than thirty members and friends gathered for a delicious luncheon catered by the renowned FIKA café, beginning with a champagne toast and concluding with a tour of the historic ASI Turnblad Mansion.

The program opened with welcoming remarks from ASI President and CEO Molly Wright Steenson before turning to St. Paul author Eric Dregni, who drew from his book *Vikings in the Attic: In Search of Nordic America*. Based on extensive historical research, Dregni's talk traced the experiences of Scandinavian immigrants across the Midwest, from their early arrivals and formation of cooperative movements to the rise of "Snoose Boulevard." Blending humor with historical research and personal anecdotes, Dregni shared the traditions, customs, and stories that have helped to shape a distinctive Nordic-American identity in the region. The event offered a warm mix of scholarship, storytelling, and fellowship, marking a joyful return of SAHS activities to members in Minneapolis.



Eric Dregni.

Carrie Danielson is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Les and Ruth Akers Endowed Chair in Community Music at Florida State University.



SAHS former board members Kevin Proescholdt, Mariann Tiblin, and Karen Humphrey at the 2025 Spring program.

Thanksgiving Reflections: Fall Program Celebrates Indigenous and Sámi Literature

Carrie Danielson

Held November 14, the Swedish-American Historical Society's online fall program brings members together from across the US and the Nordic countries for a special conversation with Rachel Wilson-Broyles, translator of Ann-Helén Laestadius's novels *Stolen* and *Punished*, and SAHS Board Member Amy Swanson-King, a Ph.D. student focused on Sámi and Indigenous studies at University of Washington. Together, they explore Sámi literature and its meaningful connections to Swedish-American history and culture, offering reflections that feel especially resonant in this season of gratitude and remembrance of Indigenous histories. We look forward to highlighting these conversations in the spring 2026 issue of *Glimtar*.

OLSSON GRANT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Swedish-American Historical Society invites applications for the **Nils William and Dagmar Olsson Research Grant**, a \$1,000 award supporting research on Swedish-American topics both historical and current. The scope of research may include scholarship that advances the understanding of transatlantic relations through the Swedish migration experience as well as the ongoing relationship between the United States and Sweden. Comparative topics related to migration, ethnicity, cultural studies, and political relations are also welcome. The Society particularly invites applications from community members and emergent scholars (early-career faculty and graduate students).

Applicants should submit to the Swedish-American Historical Society office (info@swedishamericanhist.org) the following materials, by 1 February 2026:

- A 500-1,000 word proposal including description of main research question, its salience to the field of Swedish-American studies, planned resources, an approximate timeframe needed to carry out the research, and explanation of how the award will aid in the research process
- An itemized estimate of research expenses
- A current Curriculum Vitae

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of potential contribution to Swedish-American studies, feasibility, and qualifications of the applicant to successfully complete the work. Projects should use the funds by 31 December 2027.

Children of Sweden

Andrew J. Meyer

The Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago recently received records from the children's singing and dancing group, Sverige Barnen ("Children of Sweden"). Sverige Barnen was founded in 1981 with the mission to preserve and share the culture, history, and customs of Sweden through performance in the Chicago area. Such performances included annual Sankta Lucia and Midsommar concerts as well as state fairs, Navy Pier's Festival of Cultures, the Botanic Garden's Swedish Days, the Museum of Science of Industry's Christmas Around the World, Independent Order of Svithiod's Day Picnics at VASA Park, Swedish National Day at North Park University, the Chicago United Nations Day, the Norwegian Village in Walt Disney World's Epcot Center, and other events. The group even performed for Swedish royalty in Andersonville. Participants over the years ranged from 3 to 18 years of age. The group aimed to pass down knowledge of Scandinavian traditions with many concerts performed in Swedish and English and folk dances originating mainly from Sweden and Norway, with additional dances from Denmark, Finland, and Iceland.

The records were donated by long-time director Irene Strom Spejcher and include administrative records, newspaper clippings documenting performances, sheet music, and photographs as well as some audiovisual and digital materials. This collection joins more than 60 other collections that comprise the Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago—a repository owned by the Swedish-American Historical Society that documents the Swedish-American experience in Chicago.



Sverige Barnen performing in the late 1980s outside of Nyvall Hall at North Park University.

ARCHIVAL STAFFING UPDATE

As noted in the last newsletter, the former Digital Processing Archivist here at North Park, **Sarah Hawkinson**, accepted a full-time position as curator at the Swedish American Museum in Andersonville. I'm thrilled to report that we have hired **Rebekah Baker** into this role. Rebekah is a recent graduate of North Park University where she received a BA in Curatorial Studies.

Andrew J. Meyer is Director of Archives at North Park University.

Call for Nominations for the Carl Sandburg Medal



The Swedish-American Historical Society (SAHS) is now accepting nominations for the Carl Sandburg Medal, which recognizes and honors service to the society, service to the Swedish-American community, or service to the community at large. The award is named after the American poet and author Carl Sandburg, whose work, particularly *Chicago Poems* and the Pulitzer Prize winning collection *Cornhuskers*, depicts the cities and prairies where many Swedish immigrants settled when they journeyed to North America. Most importantly, these collections tell the story of Swedish migration through the critical lens of a second-generation American born in the region to Swedish immigrants. From 1948, when SAHS was formed as the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, until his death in 1967, Sandburg was Honorary Chairman of the society. Sandburg's social and cultural impact is clear, as he is now one of the most celebrated American poets of the twentieth century. It is in this spirit that the Swedish-American Historical Society has bestowed the Sandburg Medal since 1977.

Since its inception, there have been 27 recipients of the Carl Sandburg Medal, each contributing significant and valuable service to the Swedish-American Historical Society and/or the Swedish-American community at large. Recipients include diplomats, scholars, clergy, journalists, historians, artists; all have devoted their time to important work that the society's Board of Directors wished to recognize. Notable honorees include Nils William Olsson (1982), who served as the executive director of the 1948 Swedish Pioneer Centennial Celebration, worked in the US Foreign Service at several posts throughout Scandinavia, served as President of SAHS, and established the journal *Swedish American Genealogist*, which is still in production; Nils Hasselmo (1990), a linguistics professor who served as Provost of the University of Arizona, President of the University of Minnesota, the

President of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies, and President of SAHS; Bruce Karstadt (2012), who worked as President and CEO of the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis and served several years on the Board of Directors of SAHS; and Kerstin Lane (2014), the longtime director of the Swedish American Museum and SAHS Board member who has served as the Honorary Consul General for Sweden in Chicago.

With only a few exceptions, previous recipients of the Carl Sandburg Medal have clearly fit the "service to the society" criteria and have been longtime members of the society's Board of Directors. As SAHS recognizes that service on the board is important and valuable work for the society, we also acknowledge it is not a requirement for receiving the award and going forward we wish to broaden the scope of nominees by also leaning into the second part of the charge, "service to the Swedish-American community or service to the community at large." Therefore, we are asking for your help in identifying potential candidates that fit the criteria, especially for individuals who have done important work at regional or local levels. If you know someone who would be a great candidate to receive the Carl Sandburg Medal, please let us know by sending in a confidential letter of nomination.

Letters should be 750-1000 words in length and provide ample detail justifying the worthiness of the nominee. Self-nominations are not allowed. Nominations are confidential, should be kept secret from the nominee, and will be considered only by the SAHS Awards and Grants Committee and Board of Directors. Letters can be addressed to the SAHS Awards and Grants Committee and submitted for consideration via info@swedishamericanhist.org. The Sandburg Medal is not given out annually, and nominations will be considered on a rolling basis. A full list of prior recipients is available on the SAHS website.

Emerging Scholar and Scott Prizes for 2023 and 2024

SAHS Awards and Grants Committee:

Jennifer Eastman Attebery,
Lucas Henry, and Mark Safström

As part of the Swedish-American Historical Society's mission to encourage research in the field, the Society's Awards and Grants Committee selects the Emerging Scholar Prize for best article in the journal by an undergraduate or graduate student, and the Franklin D. Scott Prize for best article by a non-student author not previously published in the journal.

The Emerging Scholars Prize for 2023 was awarded to **Sophie Martinez** for her article "Lina Sandell and the Hymnody of the Evangelical Covenant Church," which stemmed from Martinez's undergraduate thesis research at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. The Awards and Grants Committee appreciated Martinez's framing of Sandell's hymnody within the larger setting of both the Evangelical Covenant Church and hymnody in general and her deft discussion of the composition and historical trajectory of three of Sandell's hymns within the Covenant hymnal, showing changes in both text and musical notation. Martinez finds that the popularity of Swedish hymns and their inclusion or exclusion from English-language hymnals resulted from church leaders' promoting and translating certain songs. This was part of an effort to make these songs accessible to younger generations and to communicate a particular ecclesiastical identity and theological values. Lina Sandell's hymns were ideally suited for the leadership of the Evangelical Covenant Church (formerly the Swedish Mission Covenant), as her theology was an extension of the Lutheran pietist Rosenian revivals that church leaders saw as central to the early history of their denomination in the United States. Martinez's article suggests two potential continuations of this research: (1) analysis between the original Swedish texts by Sandell and their respective English translations, which may reveal interesting changes in theological foundations; and (2) analysis using sound studies, which would help further unpack the historic changes in musical construction of the works.

The Emerging Scholar Prize for 2024 was awarded to **Gregory Gaines** for his article, "Krig för Dörren' [War at the Door]: Swedish-American Newspapers and the United States' Entry into the First World War." Gaines's article was part of his doctoral research at the University of Maine. This article explores Swedish Americans' sentiments about the involvement of the United States in the First World War through the lens of Swedish-language newspapers. The Awards and Grants Committee appreciated how Gaines develops the argument that coverage of events leading to the declaration of war by the United States in 1917 indicates that the 72 Swedish-language newspapers in the United States carried a range of opinions about American entry, and that the Swedish Americans therefore could not be viewed as a



Dedication of the Lina Sandell statue at North Park College, Chicago.

monolithic group. Also important is Gaines' observation that the differences of opinion should not be viewed geographically within the US, as several of the newspapers suggested. Gaines's analysis draws on coverage during the weeks immediately before and after the declaration of war, examining their rhetoric for support, ambivalence, or concerns over the war. As the immigrants expressed their opinions about American military involvement in Europe, this also reveals how the conflict complicated the immigrants' understanding of their own identity and their negotiation of the relationship to old and new homelands.

The Franklin D. Scott Prize for 2023 was awarded to **Elizabeth Lawrence** for her article "Americans All: Swedish Vice Consul Gustaf Olson and the Incarceration of Japanese Immigrants and Japanese Americans in World War II Hawai'i." Lawrence is Associate Professor of History at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Gustaf W. Olson served as the Swedish Vice Consul in Hawai'i, but during the upheaval of the war, found himself in the unlikely position to also render diplomatic services to vulnerable and otherwise unrepresented Japanese Americans. This humanitarian act was later recognized with a medal from Emperor Hirohito. Olson sympathized with these Japanese nationals and American citizens of Japanese ancestry, whose rights and legal status were in jeopardy as they were being imprisoned in internment camps. Of particular importance in Lawrence's article is the relationship between Vice Consul Olson and Shimeji Ryusaki, the young Nisei who served as his secretary during the war years when so many Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants lived in internment on American soil. Lawrence depicts how Shimeji's skilled work as translator and administrator helped Hawai'i's Japanese residents navigate trying times following America's entry into the war. The Awards and Grants Committee appreciated Lawrence's argument that Olson's story itself reveals the double standards in American society, as the loyalty of this Swedish immigrant went unquestioned, while the Japanese Americans he served were being imprisoned out of fear that they, simply by being immigrants, might be disloyal in wartime.

The Franklin D. Scott Prize for 2024 was awarded to **Ale Pålsson** for his article, "The Two Monroes: Robert Monroe Harrison, the Monroe Doctrine, and Saint Barthelemy, 1821-1823." Pålsson is a researcher in the Department of History at



Gustaf W. Olson, Swedish Vice Consul in Hawai'i during WWII.

(continued on page 14)

(Emerging Scholars and Scott Prizes, continued from page 13)

Uppsala University in Sweden. His article analyzes the complex political interactions between Sweden and the United States in the 1820s. It was during this time that the United States was seeking to expand its influence in the Caribbean. The United States consul Robert Monroe Harrison came into conflict with Johan Norderling, who was then governor of the Swedish colony Saint Barthélemy, over concerns about pirates and privateers taking advantage of Swedish neutrality to facilitate the sale of Spanish assets. Pålsson shows that this conflict demonstrates how the US was seeking to apply the Monroe Doctrine as part of its growing ascendancy in Atlantic politics, corresponding with the simultaneous decline of Sweden-Norway's diplomatic status. The Awards and Grants Committee appreciated Pålsson's writing as equally informative and entertaining, the latter of which is not always a given in academic articles. Harrison, the main figure in Pålsson's piece, is a comedic figure whose writing was prone to dramatic flair that serves as a window into his personality and his inflated sense of self worth. Harrison's career is also particularly reflective of the overambitious foreign policy of the United States during its fledgling nationhood, when the nation was not yet able to assert influence over its hemisphere as it would towards the end of the 19th century. Of particular importance is Pålsson's focus on diplomatic letters from Harrison to John Quincy Adams, who at the time was Secretary of State for President James Monroe.

We offer our congratulations again to all of these authors for their contribution to the scholarship of Swedish America. The topics of all these essays highlight how cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives can enrich the field of Swedish-American studies.

Jennifer Eastman Attebery is Professor Emerita, English, Idaho State University; Lucas Henry is an ethnomusicologist, specializing in jazz and popular music from the Nordic world, who currently serves as Secretary of the SAHS Board; and Mark Safström is Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, and editor of Swedish-American Studies.



Contributing to *Swedish-American Studies*:

Newsletter readers are cordially invited to submit original work for publication in *Swedish-American Studies*: research papers, articles, field notes, reviews and other contributions will be considered. The deadline for inclusion in the 2027 issue of *Swedish-American Studies* is 1 October 2026, with similar deadlines for future years. Please contact journal editor **Mark Safstrom** (marksafstrom@augustana.edu) if you have any questions.

New Home for Treasures at the Swedish Colonial Society

Kim-Eric Williams

When the Swedish Colonial Society moved its art and archival collections to a new location at the historic Lazaretto in Tincum township, near Philadelphia in Essington, Pennsylvania, over 115 years of collecting came into public view for the first time. All of these discoveries are now on view admission-free on the first Saturday of every month at the recently restored Lazaretto.

Visitors will see the original life-size oil painting of the famed Governor of New Sweden, Johan Printz. This is a copy of an original in Sweden painted in 1660. It was painted by King Gustaf V's personal painter and sent to the Swedish Colonial Society at its founding in 1909. Before then the image of this 400-pound governor was not common knowledge in the US. Now his image is on the Tincum township seal and flag.

Also exhibited are portraits of Lapowinsa and Tiscohan, Lenape leaders of the 18th century painted by Gustavus Hesselius (whose self-portrait is also on display). Hesselius was one of the first portrait painters in the Delaware Valley and a man of deep Christian faith. His father was a Lutheran Pastor in Sweden and his two brothers both served as pastors at Holy Trinity, Old Swedes Church in Wilmington. His portraits of the Lenape have been interpreted as showing respect for the indigenous occupants of the Delaware Valley, supporting the idea that the New Sweden colony had a mutually beneficial relationship with the original inhabitants and was unique among the European colonies in that respect. The collection also includes a 1655 map by Per Lindeström on which Lenape names for geographical features can be seen.

The large wooden ship model of the man-of-war, *Vasa*, shows us that Sweden was indeed a European super power in the 1600's. expanding its borders and profiting by the Thirty Years War. This large vessel sank in Stockholm harbor and was raised and restored 95% intact in the 1970's. Two other historic ship models remind us of Finland's participation in the New Sweden Colony and the

Chinese trade that Sweden profited from in the 1800s.

Famed sculptor Carl Milles made a 6' 9" model of a monolith that was never actually executed. Neither funds nor a location were available for a "Sweden and America" monument in 1948. However, the model is fascinating with Milles' sense of humor showing Viking ships, Christian missionaries, a pipe organ, Governor Printz, Queen Christina riding on a horse, and the Vatican where the queen was received after renouncing the throne of Sweden.

Visitors can also view a copy of the 1695 *Hymnal* used by the Swedish settler colonialists. The kind of regalia worn by members of the Swedish Colonial Society is also shown plus a collection of 16th and 17th century Swedish coins, together with a membership card for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Fans of Taylor Swift will enjoy seeing a letter and photograph of Jenny Lind, the first mega-star female touring singer in America (1850).

Framed on the walls are color photographs of nearby Swedish colonial sites, including three of the eight churches, the landing site at Wilmington in 1638, and still-surviving log structures that illustrate that the Swedes introduced log construction to North America. Historians will appreciate seeing famed scholar Amandus Johnson's secretary desk and hand-carved 100-year-old Swedish mahogany chairs.

A recent addition to the collection is an electronic copy of the 1693 Census of Swedes on the Delaware from the Swedish National Archives.

Even more art is on the Lazaretto third floor, in the Study Center and Archives, including a forest scene by Swedish Impressionist artist Per Erik Arborelius (1842-1915) and life-size prints of photographs taken in 1938 of King Gustaf VI Adolf and Queen Louise, who visited the Delaware Valley in 1926 and 1938. There is also a copy of a picture of George Washington, painted in 1794 by Adolf Ulrik Wertmüller. It depicts an alternative view of Washington in a pose more regal than that on the US dollar bill.

Kim-Eric Williams is curator and historian for the Swedish Colonial Society.

Coming in Fall 2025: Volume 76 of *Swedish-American Studies*

Mark Safström

Volume 76 of *Swedish-American Studies*—the second in our new annual journal format—features four new peer-reviewed articles. Jennifer Eastman Attebery’s “Heritage Fiction and Folk Narratives” analyzes the novels of Lillian Budd to account for how such novels are created and their social functions. Using examples from Budd’s trilogy *April Snow*, *Land of Strangers*, and *April Harvest*, Attebery investigates how such writers utilized oral and oral-derived texts that were told as true—personal experience narratives and historical legends.

Helén Persson’s article, “Emigrant Letters and the Narration of Memory, Continuity, and Identity,” examines the letters of nineteenth-century Swedish emigrants to understand how the dramatic rupture that emigrants experienced as they changed location and context affected their memories and experience of continuity. Persson argues that the different types of narratives expressed in these letters can help account for how they helped writers to interpret their past and create a sense of continuity in their lives.

Jimmy Engren’s article, “Immigrants into Loyal Citizens,” recounts the efforts that were made during the years around World War I by elected officials and community leaders to Americanize working-class Scandinavians and other immigrants. Engren’s focus is a town with a significant Swedish population, Two Harbors, Minnesota. The Americanization campaign spearheaded by the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety (MCPS) primarily targeted the immigrant working class, including the large migrant groups of Swedes, Finns, and Norwegians. Through information campaigns, loyalty parades, patriotic meetings, and other activities, the MCPS cooperated with local constituencies and companies, such as the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad, to instill American patriotic sentiment among immigrants.

Lucas Henry’s article, “Experiencing Swedish Identity Through Anglophone Sound,” examines the environment, politics, and sounds of the Way Out West music festival in Göteborg, Sweden, drawing from quantitative performance data and field work conducted between 2018 and 2024. Henry explains how music festivals can demonstrate the evolution of cultural exchange between the United States and Sweden since the 1990s, as music landscapes have shifted in the decades since the end of the Cold War and the expansion of the European Union. This research explains one of the many ways that American cultural influence and English language have become interwoven into the hybrid culture on display at Swedish festivals.

Additional essays in the volume celebrate the legacy of the many hospitals founded by Swedish immigrants across the country. The Photo Feature showcases archival images from Swedish Hospital in Chicago, formerly Swedish Covenant Hospital. This past summer, the hospital unveiled a new history wall exhibit in the second-floor foyer of its Galter Medical Pavilion. The exhibit tells the hospital’s story through photos and artifacts. The narrative that accompanies the Photo



Nursing staff dining at the Swedish Hospital, Minneapolis.

Feature is based on the research compiled by exhibit curators Marit Johnson Awes and Janis Rueping.

To accompany the photos of Swedish Hospital in Chicago, we have also reprinted an article by Karl A. Olsson about the hospital’s history in the Field Notes for this volume. Olsson’s overview was written for the hospital’s seventy-fifth anniversary in 1961 and is titled “Quality of Mercy: Swedish Covenant Hospital and Covenant Home.” Olsson was a historian for the Evangelical Covenant Church and his article explains the denomination’s motivations for founding and running a hospital, which touches on themes and factors also relevant for many of the other hospitals we profile.

The Field Notes section also includes an article by Joy Lintelman, Byron Nordstrom, and Mark Safström, “Swedish Hospitals in the United States.” This resource explains the general social and cultural background that gave rise to the Swedish-American hospital movement, and includes brief accounts for 27 of these hospitals.



Nursing staff posed at the entrance to Swedish Hospital, Seattle.

Mark Safström is Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, and editor of *Swedish-American Studies*.

News from the Swedish-American Historical Society Office

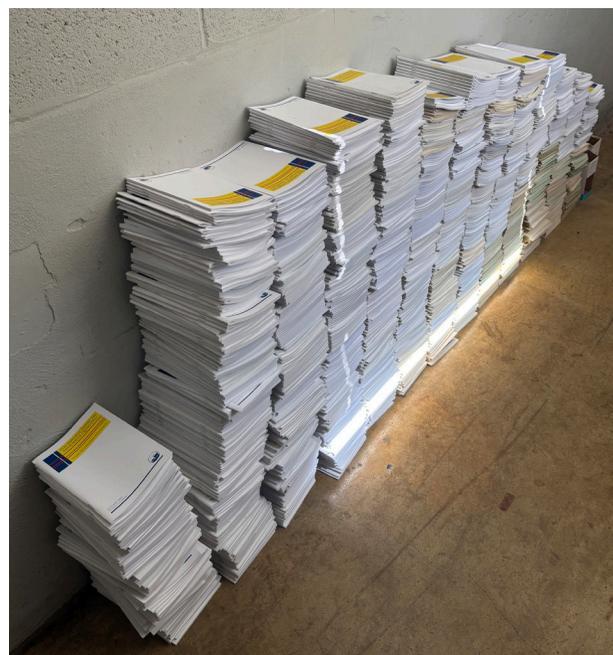
Aubrey Prestwich

Greetings from the Swedish-American Historical Society (SAHS) physical office in Sohlberg Hall at North Park University, Chicago, and the remote office in the SAHS laptop! When society members last received news from the office in *Glimtar*, I had just started this position, eager to learn how to navigate the world of historical societies while also in the middle of my coursework for a master's degree. Nearly a year and a half later, the office is running smoothly, and the MA is complete!

For this update, I'd like to let our membership know about changes to our physical and digital footprint that help the office run and members enjoy their benefits.

In the lead up to the 2024 fall board meeting, a small team of volunteers including board chair Anne Jenner and archivist Andy Meyer started the process of organizing and decluttering the society office. After their initial deep clean, we went through historic materials to understand what was necessary, important to the longevity of the society, or interesting for the archive. The board decided that keeping fewer historic copies of *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* and *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* would allow our organization to be more efficient and future-forward while maintaining our mission

to record and interpret the Swedish presence in America. This means that I have removed nearly 1,000 excess copies of the quarterly from the office. Although that sounds like an alarmingly large quantity of quarterlies, we continue to preserve multiple copies of each issue, as does the Swedish-American Archive of Greater Chicago on North Park University's campus. The quarterly still maintains pride of place in our office collection, and an entire shelving unit is now free for future use.



Stacks of quarterlies ready for recycling.

Next on the project list is scanning and digitally organizing the contents of the office file cabinets, which will allow us to have a better sense of the recent history of the society accessible through modern record-keeping practices. Thanks to previous office managers for their thorough record-keeping!

In the digital sphere, SAHS treasurer Andy Johnson and I have been compiling an office procedures manual, which will ensure the quality of my work today and the smooth succession of this position tomorrow. Alongside this project, I have created a new email folder system, and have been workshopping a digital file tree as part of the digital scanning operation. I have also modified the website to make it match our bold new graphic identity, which we have been using since our 75th anniversary in 2023. Although our website is experiencing some maintenance issues, and you may have noticed that the online store has been down intermittently, I have been soliciting the help of a web developer to make the necessary security and functionality updates that will make the website experience smooth for our users. We are working toward an improved shopping experience which will include taking credit cards without navigating away to PayPal, an issue some of our users found difficult. In the meantime, please contact the office if you have any trouble with the online store.

The day-to-day operations of my position continue as I handle the daily, monthly, and yearly roster of tasks that allow the society to run. Please note that as a general rule, I am most available in the afternoons, and I am in the society office twice a week, usually Wednesdays and Fridays. If you need to reach the office by phone, please plan to do so then.

Questions and comments may be directed to me at info@swedishamericanhist.org. My inbox is always open!

Aubrey Prestwich is Office Manager for the Swedish-American Historical Society.



Extra copies of quarterlies tidied by year.

News and Notes

EASTERN REGION

BOSTON

Scandinavian Cultural Center & Library in West Newton welcomes back Scott Rohnstrom and his new jewelry exhibit inspired by the Swedish word smorgasbord, called “Smor Gas Bord.” As he explains, “I love the compound nature of the word. Together it has become a singular idea and synonymous with a vast collection of items.”

That abundance and variety will guide the exhibition’s design in November and December 2025 among vintage and antique Scandinavian dinnerware and other surprises, creating a true smorgasbord of art and objects.

BOSTON

Scandinavian Cultural Center: In January 2026, at the Scandinavian Cultural Center, it will be possible to step into the vast world of Norse Paganism and what it means to be one. This entry level class will cover Animism, elemental magik, the Norse gods, how to have a daily practice, and end with a group journey to send you back out into the world feeling more connected to the realm around you. The instructor is Behzad “Bear” Bakhshandeh, an initiated Shaman in The Northern Shamanism Guild and Norse Pagan. You will learn together, eat together, and journey together as you discuss what it means. Saturday, January 17, 2026 | 10am – 4pm* | \$125; \$75 for members | MUST REGISTER BY January 12, 2026.

BOSTON

Scandinavian Cultural Center: Sauna Gratitude Sessions will take place at the Scandinavian Cultural Center November 14, 15, and 16, 2025, for participants to experience the traditional wood fired sauna experience. Sessions will focus on taking a few moments of sauna solitude to focus on what parts of your life you are grateful for. The intimacy of the sauna provides the opportunity to slow down enough to embrace that gratitude. Join us, renew your spirit. Sauna Mestari will be on site to provide a full orientation to all participants. Participants provide their own towels, swimsuits and hydration. Preregistration is required. See www.scandicenter.org

NEW YORK CITY

Scandinavia House: On view from October 18, 2025 to February 14, 2026 at Scandinavia House, *A Time for Everything* is a group exhibition of internationally acclaimed Nordic artists—all of whom have presented work in the Scandinavia House Galleries over the past 25 years—will underscore the vision of the Scandinavia House Galleries as a steward for new and established Nordic voices in the contemporary artistic landscape, and for promoting the exchange of ideas and culture between the United States and Nordic region.



Borrowing from the title of the seminal 2004 book by Karl Ove Knausgård, *A Time for Everything* presents a diverse range of work in a variety of media by celebrated Nordic artists. The exhibition will be accompanied by a range of related programming including artists’ talks and panels, workshops, guided gallery tours, and family activities. acclaimed cinema at Scandinavia House over the years, as well as lectures, symposia and concerts with notable Nordic cultural figures.

Scandinavia House: The 8th Annual New York Baltic Film Festival (NYBFF) returns this November with the best new films from the Baltic region. On November 6, see *The Exalted* (*Cildenie*, dir. Juris Kursietis, Latvia/Estonia/Greece, 2024); a talk with lead actor Juris Zagars follows the screening. The festival’s grand finale takes place on November 9 with the U.S. premiere of *The Visitor* (*Svecias*, dir. Vytautas Katkus, Lithuania/Norway/Sweden, 2025). See www.scandinaviahouse.org

PHILADELPHIA

American Swedish Historical Museum: “*And Let Victory Tell the Test: 250 Years of Shipbuilding in Greater Philadelphia.*” As one of the nation’s premier shipbuilding and repair regions in the world, the Greater Philadelphia region has built many ships for the United States Navy. From the early days of the Continental Navy during the American Revolution to the nuclear-powered warships of the Cold War, these facilities were a critical component of the Navy’s operations in defending America and its allies abroad. This exhibit showcases some of these ships, the people that helped build them, and their role in defending America. *And Let Victory Tell the Rest* is part of Homecoming250, a citywide celebration of this historic anniversary in Philadelphia. See www.americanswedish.org



MIDWEST REGION

CHICAGO

North Park University: Jazz and Scandinavia, November 22, 2:30 p.m. in Anderson Chapel, sponsored by the Music Performance Trust Fund. Join the NPU Jazz Faculty through a musical journey of jazz in Scandinavia. The program explores the vital role that Norway, Sweden, and Denmark played in the history of jazz through a collage of Scandinavian and American songs, composers, performers, and expatriates. This concert is free and open to the public. <https://www.northpark.edu/event-calendar/jazz-and-scandinavia/>



CHICAGO

Swedish American Museum: *Bonader*; Friday, Dec. 12 - Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. One of the most remarkable examples of Scandinavian folk art is the painted picture traditional to the Swedish peasant home. The commonly used name for these peasant paintings is *bonader*. They decorated the walls and ceilings of the homes at Christmas time and on feast days, thus adding a note of color and gaiety to the otherwise dark interiors. Between festivities, these canvas or paper panels were taken down and carefully kept, to become a part of the family inheritance. The collection of *bonader* at the Museum is



a collection of extraordinary works on linen and paper, with vegetable and mineral pigments that achieve arrays of color. They were sized for specific wall spaces and hung unframed. Several of the artists are identified. Donated to the Museum in 2000 by the Art Institute of Chicago, the 29 *bonader* represent the eighth largest known collection. They originated in 1931 among acquisitions from world traveler Florence Dibell Bartlett of Chicago. Inspired by what she viewed as a decline in creation of folk art, Bartlett acquired pieces she found in 37 countries. She was the founder in 1953 of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

<https://swedishamericanmuseum.org/special-exhibits>

MINNEAPOLIS

American Swedish Institute: Tomte Tales: Legends of Winter will be on display November 8, 2025–January 26, 2026. The American Swedish Institute’s annual Holiday Experience takes visitors on a journey that explores the Legends of Winter. Explore the Turnblad Mansion with Tomte to discover iconic holiday characters, each with their own spectacular space.

<https://asimn.org/exhibition/tomte-tales-legends-of-winter/>

SCANDIA, MINNESOTA

Scandia Heritage Alliance: Vinterfest 2026, January 24, 10a.m.–4p.m. Scandia Heritage Alliance joins with Gammelgården Museum and the City of Scandia to expand Scandia Vinterfest with free family activities,

<https://scandiaheritage.org/events>

SJÖLUNDEN, BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Concordia College Swedish Language Village offers various programs for adults and children, including a flagship youth summer camp for children 7-18 years of age.

<https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/languages/swedish>

GRAND MARAIS, MINNESOTA

Hygge Festival, February 6-16, 2026: WE HYGGE, DO YOU?

The Danish concept of “hygge” refers to embracing life’s simple pleasures. Feeling relaxed, cozy and surrounded by the warmth of family, friends, community and fire all encompass the idea of hygge. See the schedule at <https://www.visitcookcounty.com/event/hygge-festival/87/>

North House Folk School, Grand Marais: Learn traditional northern craft on the shore of Lake Superior. Many courses that focus on Scandinavian arts and crafts. <https://northhouse.org>

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

The Norsk Høstfest, a Scandinavian cultural festival, will be held September 23-26, 2026. The event features Scandinavian food, artisans, merchandise, and other attractions. Information: <https://hostfest.com>

WESTERN REGION

SEATTLE

National Nordic Museum: “New Nordic: Cuisine, Aesthetics, and Place” is a new exhibit opening on November 15, 2025, showing that food is more than nutrition – it is culture, identity, and history. New Nordic cuisine is a movement that started in the Nordic countries in the early 2000s and has since grown into an international phenomenon with its interpretation of wild nature, climate, local foodstuffs, and culinary traditions. The exhibit, organized by Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo, Norway, ongoing until March 8, 2026, will examine the “new Nordic” concept as a broad aesthetic development defined by the interaction between materials, people, and landscapes. www.nordicmuseum.org

SEATTLE

University of Washington Department of Scandinavian Studies: *Crossing North* is a podcast about Nordic and Baltic society and culture. Episodes feature stories and interviews with local university community members, students, and faculty, and with guests from the Nordic and Baltic countries, including artists, scholars, journalists, and ambassadors. *Crossing North* was produced and hosted by Dr. Colin Gioia Connors from 2019 to 2025. Dr. Connors received the 2025 Distinguished Staff Award for Innovation for his work on *Crossing North*. You can listen to it on your favorite podcasting app or on the podcast website.

<https://scandinavian.washington.edu/crossing-north-podcast>

PORTLAND

Nordic Northwest/Nordia House: The films by the late Swedish movie director Ingmar Bergman are the focus of Portland State University professor Thomas Birnie’s series of nine lectures, September 25 to November 20, 2025. Among the themes explored will be personal relationships, faith, identity, despair, alienation, and redemption. All films are shown with English subtitles. Cost per session: \$15. Nordic Northwest/Nordia House: Nordic language sessions and conversation groups, Nordic knitting circle, Portland Nordic Chorus’ Christmas concert on December 7, and ScanFair in the Oregon Convention Center on December 13, 2025, Lucia Day. For the full events calendar, visit www.nordicnorthwest.org/nordia-house

NOTE

If you are aware of upcoming events or recent happenings of potential interest to members and friends of the Swedish-American Historical Society for inclusion in the next newsletter, please let us know. Suggestions for topics of future newsletter articles are welcome, as well. Contact us at: info@swedishamericanhist.org.



Glimtar

The Newsletter of the
Swedish-American
Historical Society



SWEDISH-AMERICAN
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SwedishAmericanHist.org



SWEDISH-
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SOCIETY

Announcing Availability of Colonial Records of Swedish Churches in Pennsylvania

A nine-volume, hardbound, library binding series covering the years 1646-1786 is available from Gloria Dei, Old Swedes Church in Philadelphia, and the Swedish Colonial Society. The joint project culminates work during 1995-2021.

CONTENTS OF THE SERIES ARE:

Volume 1, The Log Churches at Tinicum and Wicaco, 1646-1696

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Volume 3, The Sandel Years, 1702-1719

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Volume 5, The Parlin Years, 1750-1759

Volume 6-A, With Catechisms, The Wrangel Years, 1759-1766

Volume 6-B, With Index, The Wrangel Years, 1766-1768

Volume 7-A, The Göransson and Hultgren Years, 1768-1786

Volume 7-B, The Göransson and Hultgren Years, 1768-1786,
with Vital Records and Index

For specific contents of each volume, contact the Swedish
Colonial Society: Colonialswedes.net

Each single volume sells for \$10.00 including postage and
handling.

The complete set of 9 books for a total price of \$50.00, including
postage and handling to a USA address while supplies last. Additional
postage for addresses abroad. Checks should be made out to "Gloria
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