

# Swedish Roots in Oregon

## An Immigration Research Project



December 2017 Newsletter Editor: Rhonda Erlandson Volume 36



**Swedishrootsinoregon.org**

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SRIO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Your donation is tax deductible and supports research into the lives and history of Swedish immigrants in Oregon.

### COMING FULL CIRCLE

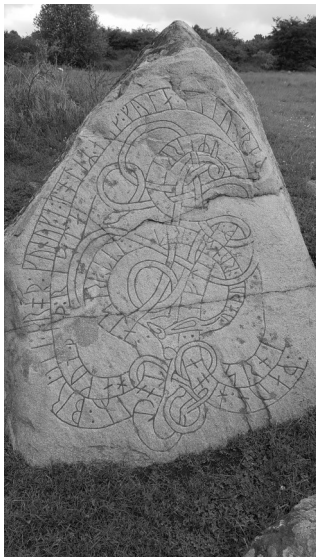
Here we are coming round full circle again, arriving at the fun and festivity of another Scan Fair. This time last year, SRIO members were focused on publishing our latest book in time for its debut at Scan Fair 2016. We proudly unveiled ***Across Sixteen Countries*** right on schedule. A week later - on the feast of Santa Lucia - the book was celebrated in a release party at Bethany Lutheran Church in Warren, Oregon. So it seemed the project came to an end and we called it a wrap.

And yet the wonderful story encircling C.J. Larson and the Swedish roots he planted so deeply in Oregon was not quite closed. Indeed, another chapter unfolded when seven months after the book's release, I and former SRIO board member Ingeborg Dean flew off to Sweden for 3 weeks. During our trip, we planned - as much as possible - to retrace C.J.'s steps when he and "his girls," daughter Anna and soon-to-be-wife Signe, made their final visit to Sweden in 1921.

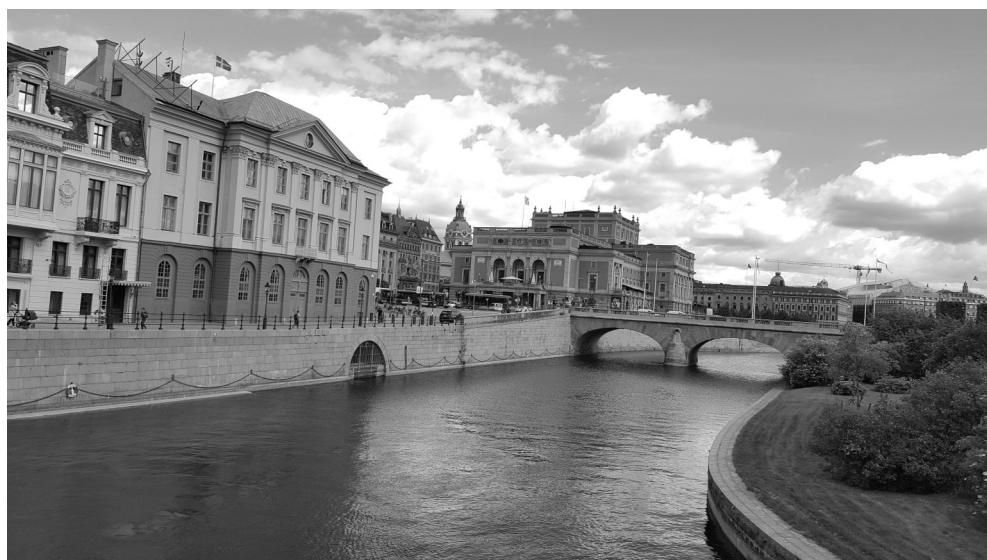
We started out in the lake district of Mälaren where archaeologists believe the oldest Viking settlements in Sweden began. C.J. points out in ***Across Sixteen Countries*** that Sweden's first coins were minted in this region. Here we examined awesome rune stones and observed cows grazing peacefully on ancient Viking burial mounds. Next we flew to Norrland where C.J. and the girls "wanted to hurry toward the north...to see the Midnight sun." When they arrived on Midsummer Eve, C.J. wrote, "we wandered out to a forest grove, where on a cliff overlooking a beautiful bay, we sat and awaited the midnight hour and sang one song after another. It was so lovely and bright...The next morning, we traveled yet further north through Norrland's magnificent landscape...We rode the whole night, but it was bright as day." Just as our protagonists had done, Ingeborg and I breathed deeply the fresh arctic air and slept peacefully through the lovely, bright nights we spent in Norrland.

Ingeborg and I actually celebrated Midsummer in Dalarna, Sweden's quintessential core and a region where C.J. and the girls also spent a good deal of time touring. As C.J. did, we stayed a few days in Falun and like him, we were fascinated by the old copper mine and the tiny workers' cabins painted in *Falu rödfärg*. These cheerful little houses are still home to many families today. We visited nearby Borlänge where, in the *gammelgård* on Midsummer Day, "they hoisted the blue and yellow flag and a festive atmosphere prevailed everywhere." Here, in this old city, we stood outside Ingeborg's childhood

*Continued on page 9*



***Rune stones and cows grazing  
on Viking burial mounds in  
Mälaren***



***Beautiful Stockholm***

***Formal gardens at  
Waldemarsudde***



***See more photos on pages 10-12***



### ***Tusen tack, Herje!***

After nearly 10 years as an SRIO member, Herje Wikegard will step down from his board position at the end of December, 2017. Herje has contributed to our organization in many ways, most significantly as Treasurer and Web Master. As a relatively new Swede in Oregon, Herje has also provided SRIO with invaluable insight into the modern immigrant experience.

In the late 1970's Herje was a student at Chalmers University of Technology located in Göteborg. After he graduated, he worked as a computer engineer for a consulting firm that eventually became the distributor for an American company called Oregon Software, Inc. Oregon Software was located in southeast Portland and, in the days before PC's were known, they introduced a Pascal compiler for all of Digital Equipment Corporation's operating systems. Herje was the main contact person for marketing and advertising between Oregon Software and the Swedish consulting firm in Göteborg.

Starting in 1982, Herje made a number of business trips to Oregon before accepting a three-month assignment that eventually led to full-time employment in Beaverton with Cascade Microtech, Inc. In a 1998 piece titled "I felt exactly as if I had stepped into a movie," Herje described his first impressions when he arrived Stateside: "I remember the first time I landed in the United States - guards, customs officials with pistols, and there was probably a sheriff somewhere too, and I thought *Wow - the Wild West!*" You can read Herje's further adventures as he settled into his new life in Oregon, including marrying and raising a family, in SRIO's book, ***Ten New Lives: Swedes in the Pacific Northwest***. Herje will be staffing the SRIO table at Scan Fair on Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Stop by and say hej to him!



**To Herje from the members of SRIO, we say Skål! and a hearty thanks for all your hard work over the years. We look forward to many more years of friendship with you in Oregon's Swedish community.**

# ***SRIO Presents***

## **The Art of Tord Nygren**

by Ingeborg Dean

Tord Nygren is a well known Swedish illustrator who has a great number of books to his name. He has also done work for magazines and newspapers, and last year's Advent calendar published by the Church of Sweden was designed by him. He began illustrating books for children and teens in 1964 and in all his work has applied many different techniques. Since the 1980's his pictures have appeared regularly in the American Cricket Magazine's output.

Tord Nygren was born in Stora Tuna, Dalarna in 1936, and it appears there was a pencil and a brush in his hand from the beginning. At age three, he would lie on the kitchen floor and draw, and when he was on his way to the woods, sitting behind our Mother on her bike, he would exclaim about how pretty the surrounding landscape was! At age 12, he was given his first oil paints by his uncle. His Father built him an easel and from that time forward, on Saturday and Sunday mornings, he would take his paint box and easel, hop on his bike and be gone for the day! Being his younger sister, I can vouch for the fact that Tord's whole life has been in its essence ART.



**Artist Tord Nygren in his studio near Gnesta, Sweden**

At age 16, Tord started working at the local Konsum department store, doing window displays and whatever else demanded artistic skills. In the evenings he worked on a mail art course, and he was a member of the local "konststudieklubben" (the art study club). At 21 Tord moved to Stockholm, having been accepted at the venerable Konstfackskolan. He again worked on window displays at a Konsum store during the day and at night attended art school. There he met his future wife, Birgit, who is now an impressive textile artist. Tord tried working at an advertising agency for a while but, at the early age of 25, decided to go the freelance route. His great and varied skills have made him a sought after illustrator all these many years.

Tord is also a great painter and creator of painted figures in wood.



Stop by the SRIO table for

**original art by Tord Nygren**

A limited number of matted paintings will  
be available for purchase  
**only** at Scan Fair 2017



## **THE GENEALOGY CORNER**

by Ann Baudin Stuller

SRIO has recently added membership applications for the Swedish Society Linnea/Svenska sällskapet Linnea to the Oregon and Swedish Roots in Oregon databases. My fellow genealogist, David Anderson, scanned the originals and David and I have been adding information gleaned from the applications: name, birthdate, birth place, date of arrival, and occupation.

Svenska Bröderna, Linnea's forerunner, was established as a mutual benefit society under the leadership of Phillip W. Liljeson on October 29, 1888 in Portland. Four years later the name was changed to Svenska sällskapet Linnea on November 30, and women were then admitted to membership.

Not only did Linnea serve as a source of benefits but also included aid to the needy; it also provided advice and information to recent immigrants and provided a social outlet for Swedes in the Portland area with dances, parties, and picnics in addition to the regular monthly meetings. The society was a cultural center, too, with a library and programs emphasizing the contributions of Swedish Americans to their new homeland and their Swedish cultural heritage.

In 1910, the membership included 337 members; however, the social activities attracted many non-members. The decline of Swedish immigration to the Portland area also resulted in fewer members, and in the 1940s, the membership used English rather than Swedish.

Entering the information from the applications has been quite challenging at times: handwriting sometimes requires a little imagination. Multiple applications for the same individual may show different spellings: Jonasson changes to Johnson, Persson to Pearson. Checking with US census records can show a person's anglicized name. The place of birth may be just the parish or province whereas a check with the Swedish church records gives the village or farm. Sometimes the birthdate is missing the day or the year, and again, a glance at the church records and the missing information is retrieved. A few individuals have not completed the application and so we have few clues to help trace their roots.



TILL EMBETSMÄN OCH MEDLEMMAR AF FÖRENINGEN  
SVENSKA SÄLLSKAPET LINNEA

Portland, Ore., den 7. Aug 1900.

Jag undertecknad anhåller om inträde som medlem af eder förening. Jag är född i Gudmundrå församling i Västernorrland län i Sverige, den 31. Mars 1886. Ankom till Amerika den 11. Nov. 1902. Min närvarande adress är N:o 564. Kerbygatan. Yrke Laborant. Om jag blifver intagen i eder förening, underkastar jag mig edra lagar och bruk, om de ej strida mot mina religiösa och politiska åsikter.

Inträdesafgiften \$ 3/ jemte läkarebetyg (om så af föreningen påfordras) att jag är fri från alla smittosamma och kroniska sjukdomar, bifogas.

REKOMMENDERAD AF:

Högaktningsfullt

O. Berglund.  
C. Hallqvist.

H. E. Grimsen  
C. M. Rosenberg PRO. SEK.

Undersökningskomiteens rapport:

J. E. Johnson För—Emot  
L. F. Alexander För—Emot  
Sam. Holm För—Emot

Läkare attest.

**Note:** The above application was my maternal grandfather's, and his birthplace was not listed correctly. Instead he listed his most recent home parish. I have had a personal interest in this project as at a Linnea dance was where my parents first met.



## **SRIO DATABASES!**

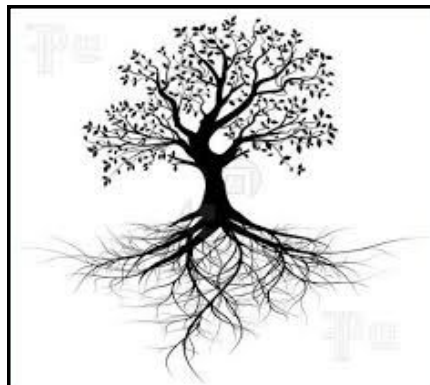
by David Anderson



If you are reading this chances are that you are interested finding out about, or contributing more to, recording people of Swedish origins who lived in Oregon! Swedish Roots in Oregon (SRIO) currently maintains three databases on the Swedish America Heritage Online (sweame.org) website. There data from many sources can be found. The sources include U.S. Census records, marriage records, Declarations of Intentions, Death and Birth certificates, newspaper clippings, headstones, family records and photographs, and Swedish church records to name just a few! Even though we have over 21.5 thousand names in our databases we have just scratched the surface of the total number of people with Swedish origins who lived in Oregon.

From our SRIO website follow our Genealogy links to the SWEAME Genealogy database webpage. This link will take you to a list of 5,662 people in the "Oregon" tree who have immigration dates on their profiles. At the top of the page is a light blue menu bar. Click on the "Find" drop down menu and click on the 'Cemeteries' link. Here you will find a list of cemeteries found in the entire SweAme database. Scroll down to Oregon, and you will find a list of the State's counties that currently have cemeteries listed. Go to Multnomah County and scroll down the page to see the thumbnail photos of headstones currently linked to various cemeteries. Clicking on the cemetery name (for example, click on Multnomah Park Cemetery #12), you will also find some death certificates of people buried there in addition to the photos of headstones.

Genealogy is a fascinating endeavor. There is much to be done to record people of Swedish origins in Oregon. We can use the help in photographing headstones in remote cemeteries; scanning documents at the State Archives in Salem; and posting and attaching the scanned documents in to our databases. The only pay in this undertaking is from the satisfaction of helping someone else connect to their roots here in Oregon, or back in Sweden; and that is worth a lot.





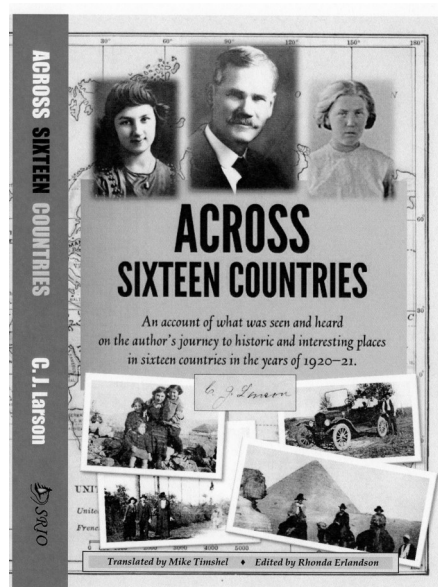
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home and enjoyed listening to her reminisce about her family and the friends who once lived in the neighborhood. Before leaving the area, we visited the incomparable Carl Larsson home in Sundborn. Crossing the threshold of *Lilla Hyttlös* was like stepping through a looking glass directly into Larsson's paintings.

Like C.J. and the girls, we spent many days enjoying the beautiful city of Stockholm. Just as our protagonists had done, we made an excursion to Djurgården where we toured Waldemarsudde, the exquisite estate of the Swedish "painter prince" Eugen who was a contemporary of Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn among other well-known artists.

At last we made our way to Södermanland where C.J. was born in 1863. As guests of artist Tord Nygren (see related article on page 4) in his charming countryside home and studio near Gnesta, we were perfectly poised to roam this beautiful part of Sweden. One major highlight of our time in this area was spending an afternoon in Strångsjö at Nätörpstugan, C.J.'s birthplace and childhood home. There we were graciously welcomed by the current owners of Nätörpstugan, Hans and Mylis Larsson. The family name is a wonderful coincidence; Hans and Mylis do not count themselves among C.J.'s descendants. Nevertheless, they cherish the old home and have lovingly restored it, creating a little spot of paradise on earth. While there, we visited Stora Malms Church where C.J. and his family walked the 12 miles every Sunday to church and where C.J. was baptized. After sharing a delicious meal prepared by Mylis, we drove to Katrineholm, a city where C.J. also felt quite at home before he embarked for America as an 8-year-old boy with his family in 1869.

As we bade farewell to Södermanland, Ingeborg and I observed how we had come full circle in the saga of C.J. Larson. Our journey struck us as a magical, mystical tour that included the presence of C.J., Anna, and Signe, directing us here and there and pointing to revelations shared in ***Across Sixteen Countries***. We marveled at how SRIO board member Mike Timshel had stumbled upon ***Genom Sexton Länder*** in a small used book shop in Independence, Oregon some years ago. Translating the travel memoir from the old Swedish into modern, poetically rendered English, Mike brought C.J. and the girls to life and set us on the path of a grand adventure.



**On this festive occasion as you circle around the sights and sounds of Scan Fair, we invite you to stop by SRIO's table and learn how the adventure of uncovering the history of Swedish immigration to Oregon continues – at Jul and all year long—**

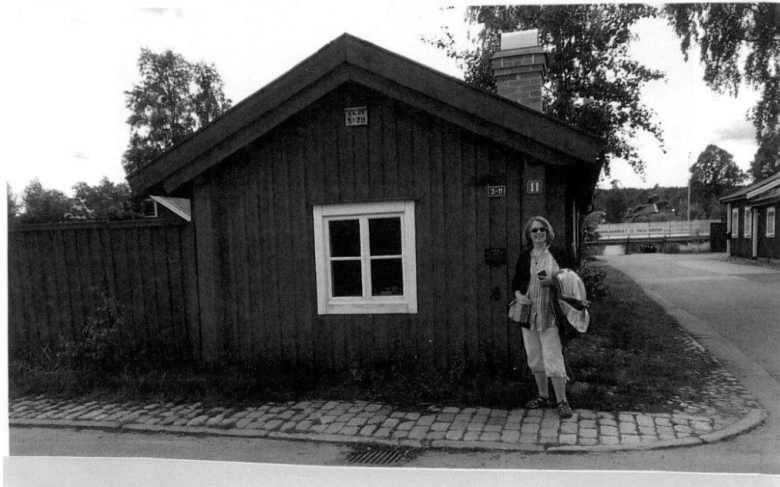


***Ingeborg enjoying the magnificent landscape of Northern Sweden***



***Midnight in Norrland***





***This 10x10 Falu rödfärg house once housed a mining family of seven.***

***A tribute to the copper miners of Falu Gruva. The mine operated from the 10th century until its closure in 1992***



***Midsommar festivities in the heart of Dalarna***

***Rhonda lights a candle for C.J. Larsson in Stora Tuna Kyrka on Midsommar Day***



***Nästorpstugan  
where C.J. Larson  
was born in 1863***



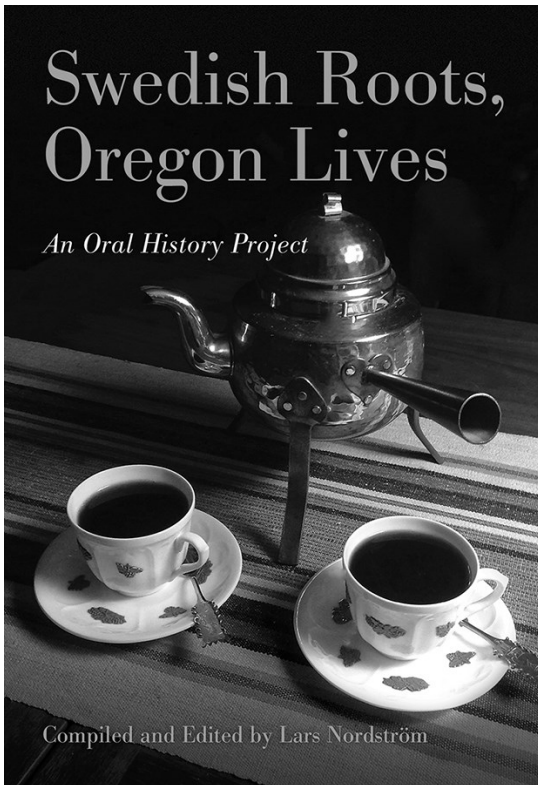
***Meeting Hans Larsson,  
current owner of Nästorpstugan***

***The baptismal font where C.J. was  
baptized dates to the late 1500's***



***Stora Malms Kyrka where C.J.'s family worshipped. It was the family's break from the Church of Sweden that led to their eviction from Nästorpstugan and set them on their journey to America in 1869.***





***"Reading Swedish Roots, Oregon Lives is like sitting around a table with friends, sharing stories and savoring a cup of good strong Swedish coffee."***

