SFHS MISSION

- Preserve history of Swedish Finns, their fraternal lodges, individual histories, lodge records, and genealogies.
- Enable SFHS collection to be accessible via Internet.
- Build bridges between immigrant descendants and family in Finland through genealogy assistance.
100,000 SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS EMIGRATED

25% of Swedish Finn emigrants returned home.

The Swedish Finn Historical Society archives evidence of their adventure.

SFHS is the official repository for Order of Runeberg records.

SFHS believes no name should be forgotten. You can help!
WHAT DID OUR ANCESTORS LEAVE BEHIND?

They left the known world, and moved to the unknown.
Terjärv Heimsjö, or “home place lake”, looks idyllic, but those ridges are granite. Between the years of 1870–1914, 1,467 left for Australia and North America. In one century {1860–1960} a total of 1,800 left. Records show that 164 draft age men never reported.

Emigrants tended to settle near others from their same birth parish. Rochester, Washington has Salem Lutheran Church where Swedish was spoken for years. Out of 100 farms, 99 were owned by Swedish Finns.
Dick Erickson wanted to leave his descendants with a historical record of their heritage. He documented the history of his family and those of the other Swedish Finn immigrants in the Rochester area, ensuring their brave migration was captured and told.

An African proverb states, “When an elder dies, a library burns.”

DON’T LET YOURS BE LOST!
Leaving Swedish Behind

They left behind the Swedish language, their mother tongue. Most didn’t speak English.

Finland was part of the Swedish Kingdom from 1150–1809 AD.

Åbo Castle was the center of Sweden’s authority in Finland for 650 years.
The emigrants left their homes, families, schoolmates and childhood haunts.
They left their church, the pastor who taught them to read, and their congregation.
They left a village in which skilled tradesmen lived, and social traditions supported the sense of belonging.
Finland was still an agricultural nation during the Great Wave of Emigration. Some farms had been worked for generations.
Most farms had wood lots for building, fencing, and firewood. Children early learned crafts like woodworking, textile production, and caring for cows, sheep, and horses.
The emigration to North America has been characterized as an Ostrobothnian phenomenon—e.g. during the period 1870-1914, 52% of emigrants came from Vasa/Vaasa province and a third from Svensk Österbotten.
Emigrants boarding for the first leg: Copenhagen or Hull.
WHERE DID SWEDISH FINNS SETTLE IN THE USA?
Independent Order of Good Templars began in New York in 1852, in the style of Freemasons, but with a goal of total abstinence from alcohol. The model worked as well for societies in Swedish Finn communities.

1892—Worcester, Massachusetts
1896—Eureka, California
1897—Gardner, Massachusetts
1898—Eveleth, Minnesota, Bessemer, Michigan
Ironwood, Michigan
Neganee, Michigan
1899—Dollar Bay, Michigan
Gladstone, Michigan, Amasa, Michigan
Ludington, Michigan
Eureka, Utah
Crystal Falls, Michigan
1902

The various temperance societies united. Together they founded the Svensk Finsk Nykterhets Förening af Amerika
Morgonstjärnan No. 1, Ironwood, Mich.
The lodge became a place for families.
SICK BENEFIT SOCIETIES

Membership fees helped cover some medical costs. The members of a group formed the social unit as well. Often women’s sewing circles paid for special needs, such as uniforms for the band.

1894—Coos Bay, Oregon
1897—Branford, Connecticut
1898—Bessemer, Michigan
1899—Ashland, Wisconsin
1900—Boston, Massachusetts
A NEW FRATERNAL ORDER

In the 1920 annual convention both the temperance and the benefit associations decided to merge all their assets into one organization, the Order of Runeberg.

Aid and benefit provisions remained the same, and the temperance requirement was based on the federal prohibition.
The Ledstjärnan was established in 1906. SFHS archives hold one precious copy from 1918, in addition to issues from 1935 on.

The SWEDISH FINN temperance newspaper was printed, in English, beginning in 1946.
INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF RUNEBERG

FYLGIA LADIES CHORUS, SEATTLE 1922. MISS ALICE FORSELL, DIRECTOR
ARRIVAL AT AIRPORT IN HELSINGFORS OF RUNEBERG EXCURSION AND CHORUS, JUNE 13, 1966.
Factors Effecting Membership

- Older members died at an increasing rate.
- First generation American-born weren’t engaged in local lodges.
- USA immigration quotas put in place in 1925. No new blood from Finland.
- WWII Nearly 0 immigrants from Finland

1929—8,500 members
1933—6,400
1950—6,680
1961—4,300
1965—4,100
TODAY’S ORDER OF RUNEBERG

2014
Dollar Bay, Michigan
Eureka, California
Butte, Montana
Tacoma, Washington
Vancouver, British Columbia
North Bend/Coos Bay, Oregon
New Westminster, British Columbia
New Haven, Connecticut
Finlandia Order of Runeberg
{in Swedish Ostrobothnia, Finland}
It’s not hard to imagine the shock with which a farm girl from Bennäs or Föglö felt when she arrived in this burgeoning frontier town.
Some settled into a community for life, others moved on again. And sometimes again.

1918 Cloquet fire

1934 Gus Hall leads workers’ strike against big steel.
In the 1920’s, lodges in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois grew smaller. Lodges on the west coast grew larger. San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, among others, far outnumbered the membership in the midwest.
I’m the great-grandchild of Frank Carlson’s youngest daughter. My aunt used to say we had cousins in San Francisco. I would like to find them. My great-grandmother was born in Finland but emigrated to the Hoquiam-Aberdeen area of Washington state.

Sincerely,
Karen Anderson
Frans Konstantin Mannfolk
AKA Frank C. Carlson
### SFHS DATABASES ON LINE

#### DEE RESULTS

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<th>Born place</th>
<th>Town or county</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Lodge</th>
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**Nyquist** | **Nellie** | **Lappfjärd** | **San Francisco** | **California** | **Lodge No. 104 Order of Runeberg, (1968)** | **IOR (1898-1968) Memorabilia “Minneskrift” Anders M. Myhrman**
Swedish Finns End Up in California

1940
Nyquist, Anders born in Colorado, Wife Nellie Born in Finland, Children in California. 1920: His father, born Finland, emigrated 1898.
THE SWEDISH FINN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOUNDED IN 1992
### SFHS HOME PAGE

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- **Emigration from Finland**: Map of the main routes and destinations.
- **SFHS Mission**: To gather and preserve the emigration history of Swedish Finns across the world, to connect Swedish Finns with their roots in Finland and to honor our cultural heritage.
- **Swedish Finns**: Background, where they came from, where they settled and key organizations.
- **Swedish Finn Emigration Story**: Information, data and family stories.
- **The TALKO Project**: Talko Genealogy Project—over 2,8 million names.
- **Finlander Forum**: Finlander discussion forum—topics about Swedish Finn genealogy and culture.
THE STARTING POINT WAS SEATTLE

1992
Four boxes stored in closet at Bethany Lutheran Church
7400 Woodlawn NE
Seattle, WA

1994
Trinity Methodist Church
Ballard {Scandinavian Seattle }
6512 23rd NE
Seattle, WA

1999
5410 17th NW
Seattle, WA

2006–2014
1920 Dexter Ave N
Seattle, WA
SFHS OFFICE, LIBRARY, & ARCHIVES

Mail, accounting, filing, accessioning, cataloging, responding to genealogy queries, coordinating events, and board meetings start here. The library includes over 4,400 books with parish histories shelved as a group.
SFHS RUNS ON VOLUNTEERS

Don Ostrand and John Ostergard get SFHS organized!
DICK ERICKSON
PRESIDENT
OF SFHS
SINCE 2003
In our home library we have a treasure: a bound volume of the Swedish Finn newspaper Åbo Underättelser, year 1837. One hundred and one issues of the paper were published that year.

The founder/publisher/editor of the paper was Christian Ludvig Hjelt (20 July 1786 - 23 Aug 1849), son of Niclas Hjelt (1739-1808) and Johanna Margaretha Caloander (1740-1807). Christian Ludvig studied at the Åbo Royal Academy on a stipend 1803-1809 and graduated with Doctor of Philosophy degree 1810. His thesis was titled "De Virtute Mahumedis aquam ex arena vel petra eliciendi."

At the end of August 1811 John Paterson, a representative of The British Bible Society, arrived in Åbo. His mission was to research the conditions for publishing a Finnish bible edition, arrange for its distribution and establish a Finnish bible society. Bishop Jacob Tengström was in favor, and the bible society was established in March 1812. The British Bible Society donated 750 pounds and Emperor Alexander I gave 5,000 rubles to finance the printing of the Finnish bibles.

The Bible Society solicited bids for the printing. A consortium consisting of three professors from the Åbo Akademy was the successful bidder. In 1816 the consortium established a company aiming to operate a printing business. They called the company the Bible Print Shop. In 1822 the professors sold their shares to Christian Hjelt. The print shop had been located at the home of one of the professors, physics professor Gustaf Gabriel Hällström. In 1825 Hjelt moved the printing office to his residence at Stora Tavastgatan 7 in Åbo. In addition to the Hjelt family, the print shop foreman Christian Evert Barck, his family and three apprentices lived in the house.

In 1824 Hjelt started printing and distributing a newsletter, Åbo Underrättelser (Åbo Tidings). Åbo Underrättelser was published biweekly until September 5, 1827 when large parts of Åbo were destroyed in a fire. The Hjelt residence, which housed the print shop, was destroyed as well. But Hjelt did not give up, and in 1829 the publication commenced anew. In 1831 he commissioned architect P.J. Gylich to design and build a new home. The Säve's House, still standing, is located close to the Dome Square. The house is now owned by Åbo Akademi.

What do we see in a typical issue of the publication? All the 101 issues of 1835 have four pages. Let's take Christian Ludvig Hjelt and Åbo Underrättelser by Gunnar Damström researching.

The Quarterly

Editor—Gunnar Dahmström & Publisher—Rikki Nyman

Fall 2013
GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Let us know you are coming. Here, Ole Granholm, visiting from Terjärv, interviews Norm Westerberg, Honorary Finnish Consul Emeritus for Washington State. Ole published EMIGRANTVÄGAR, a collection of emigrant histories first collected by Hilding Vidjeskog.
EXHIBITS AT FINNFEST SINCE 1996
ANNUAL LUNCHEON & MEETING BEGINS WITH...

SOCIAL HOUR
THE SOCIAL HOUR BEGINS WITH COFFEE
AND SWEDISH FINN MUSIC
THE CHEF HAS SWEDISH FINN ROOTS
The Program features Swedish Finn heritage.
June Pelo was featured at both Friday’s genealogy workshop and Saturday’s meeting & luncheon.
SFHS CELEBRATES SWEDISH FINN HERITAGE
Temperance Society & Order of Runeberg lodges were organized primarily for social reasons.
THE FUTURE BEGAN IN 2012

VIRTUAL SOCIETY CONCEPT

- Dick Erickson proposed the digitization of SFHS’ holdings and the board approved.
- The board contracted a part-time “Going Digital” project manager, Kim Jacobs, conveniently a Swedish Finn.
- Projects well under way include: a living DEE database, The Quarterly database, electronic mailing lists, photo and church records database, and member outreach to gather emigrant data.
SFHS IS A VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION

- SFHS Wiki pages
- Email communication
- News website
- Digital Quarterlies
- Associated organizations and regional contacts beyond the US
THE FUTURE

- Histories of Swedish Finn Settlements recorded and preserved by researchers in their communities.
- Books about Swedish Finn emigrants and their families from around the world.
- DEE database Online and searchable.
- Swedish Finns connected throughout the world wherever they may live.