About The Swedish Finn Historical Society

Its founding, development, goals, digitization, and future
The Society was first founded to preserve records of Order of Runeberg lodges which were being closed as their membership died away. The two who foresaw the need: Suzanne Alskog had researched her German family, then started on her husband’s Swedish Finn family, traveled to Finland with the Order of Runeberg Chorus and met family researchers who wanted to connect with American family. Niles Thompson, with Swedish Finn grandparents, has a degree in archiving and museum administration.

SFHS became a conduit between Finland and North America. Through Internet, all the world has access to the SFHS digitized archive. We volunteers feel strong ties to Swedish-speaking Finland. Saving traces of our ancestor’s lives has become possible with Society resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFHS Topmenu</th>
<th>Finlander</th>
<th>SFHS</th>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Talko</th>
<th>DEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emigration from Finland</td>
<td>Map of the main routes and destinations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFHS Mission</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Finns</td>
<td>Background, where they came from, where they settled and key organizations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Finn Emigration Story</td>
<td>Information, data and family stories.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The TALKO Project</td>
<td>Talko Genealogy Project—over 2,8 million names.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finlander Forum</td>
<td>Finlander discussion forum—topics about Swede Finn genealogy and culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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—20014
1920 Dexter Ave N
Seattle, WA
Donations of books and lodge records quickly outgrew the closet space in Bethany Lutheran. A Ballard church wanted to rent unused third floor classrooms, and SFHS began with one room. That expanded to three rooms, computers, printers, and more volunteers. Oh, don’t forget the coffee pot! Three flights up, carrying boxes of donations grew old, and the search was on for a street level space.

SFHS moved to 17th Avenue NW, still in Ballard. The most recent move was in 2007 when the Swedish Club on lower Queen Anne Hill leased space to SFHS. Today volunteers work on 5 computers, two printers, and a scanner; archived genealogies, photos and documents, and a library of several thousand books.
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.
BEVERLY HUCHALA IS OFFICE MANAGER, DIRECTING EMAILS ONWARD, AVOIDING FAMILY RESEARCHERS, PLANNING PROCEDURES AND CHECKING TO MAKE SURE IT GETS DONE. SHE TAKES RESERVATIONS FOR EVENTS, HANDLES CHECKS, AND UPDATES MEMBERSHIP RECORDS. SHE ALSO SUPPLIES US WITH THE BEST COOKIES IN THE WORLD. I SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED THAT COFFEE’S STARTED THE FIRST THING AFTER SHE UNLOCKS THE DOOR.

BEVERLY’S FATHER WAS A NYLUND. SHE HAS RESEARCHED HER FAMILY FOR AT LEAST 40 YEARS. THE GUEST AT THE COMPUTER IS GETTING PERSONAL HELP WITH HER FAMILY SEARCH. SHE COULD HAVE JUST SENT US AN EMAIL QUERY. BUT IT’S MORE FUN TO BE AT THE OFFICE.
DICK ERICKSON
PRESIDENT OF SFHS SINCE 2003
Dick Erickson has directed the vision of SFHS since 2006, and served as vice president the two previous years. He asked the Board to consider what should be happening in 15 years, in 50 years. Then he prepared the time line for steps to achieve the vision.

He is the most active president the Society has had in its 22 years. D E E “Documenting Every Emigrant”, and the digital archive plans are his. Dick keeps our offsite storage catalogued and accessible as well. Currently researching the Swedish Finns in Anacortes and the plywood cooperative there, he also has recently completed a history of Little Terjärv, in Rochester WA, where his grandparents settled.
SFHS RUNS ON VOLUNTEERS

Don Ostrand and John Ostergard get SFHS organized!
[Left] DON OSTRAND, [1937-2014] directed the archive and cataloguing procedures. He managed the communication system beginning with the Trinity Methodist location in [He was also the director of THE PAC NW TELEPHONE MUSEUM.]

[Right] John Ostergard manages the accession of donations such as books or photos
The Quarterly

Editor—Gunnar Dahmström & Publisher—Rikki Nyman

The Quarterly is the strongest worldwide link the Society has with its members. Editorial policy encourages submissions about Swedish Finn cultural heritage, emigration history, family tree searches, and much more.

Gunnar is happy to help you edit stories for the Quarterly. Email documents to sfhs@qwestoffice.net
GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Let us know you are coming. Here, Ole Granholm, visiting from Terjärvi, 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

SFHS has missed few FinnFests since 1996. Norm Westerberg built the first exhibit structure. Syrene Forsman has researched the year’s topic, such as The New Sweden Finns for the Philadelphia FinnFest. She produces the 2X2 foot panels with text and graphics. Don Forsman, George and Judi Miller have been the exhibit crews, setting up in the Tori, and answering questions from the Tori visitors. Technology enables us to search for family names in Finland via SFHS databases and other websites.
ANNUAL LUNCHEON & MEETING BEGINS WITH...
THE SOCIAL HOUR BEGINS WITH COFFEE
AND SWEDISH FINN MUSIC

Vern and Jeanie Lindquist
THE CHEF HAS SWEDISH FINN ROOTS
The Program features Swedish Finn heritage.
For example, MARK HILLMAN shared his 2013 itinerary and equipment list when he spoke to the members. He hopes SFHS members will join him one year.

In 2012 and 2015 SFHS arranged a guided **Swedish Finn Heritage Tour** by bus to the Swedish-speaking districts of Finland. Destinations include Åbo, the original capitol of Finland, and Helsingfors, as well as Vasa. Reunions with relatives were included in the schedule. SFHS members Lynn and Lee Thompson coordinated the itinerary.

The next Heritage Tour is planned for 2017.
June Pelo was featured at both Friday's genealogy workshop and Saturday's meeting & luncheon.
The Friday workshop allowed a group of members with varied genealogy experience to pool their knowledge, and get help for “the next step” from the SFHS genealogy volunteers.

June Pelo shared her genealogy skills with the workshop, and the next day during the Luncheon program, she described ties with her “home” folks in Finland. She also wrote an article about her topics for the Quarterly.

June may have one of the largest databases of Swedish Finn and Finnish family names in North America. She is renowned for generously sharing her information, and for connecting families here and in the Nordic nations.

SFHS nominated her for the Suomi Seura Silver Badge of Merit award in 2007.
SFHS CELEBRATES SWEDISH FINN HERITAGE
SFHS has arranged events and venues, managed PR, provided housing, developed itineraries and contacts for Swedish Finns wishing to travel in the USA, particularly along the West Coast.

SFHS annually budgets funds for grants to assist projects or persons researching, publishing, or presenting cultural materials about Swedish Finn emigration and culture.

SFHS offers assistance making contact with relatives in North America, Finland, or Sweden through volunteer representatives across Finland, through Facebook, and through the SFHS website managed by Hasse Nygård. Hasse organized and manages the TALKO database [2 million + names] and Finlander, a discussion forum with 3,000+ members.
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.
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.
In 2001, the first steps into the future were taken. Hasse Nygard expanded the SFHS website, adding data pages and recruiting donors for the TALKO project. The Society corresponds primarily through email, and sends electronic quarterly bulletins to the members. The Quarterly is available both electronically on the website and in hard copy.

Interested genealogists, historical societies, and research organizations in parishes across Swedish-speaking Finland volunteer to assist members as well.

The “brick and mortar” office has open hours for visitors. The library, which includes a large collection of parish histories, is available for on-site research. You can get genealogy help for a couple of hours or sign up for a day-long genealogy workshop. Or contact the volunteer genealogy crew through the SFHS website for help with family name queries,
SFHS is a virtual organization

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