Homes in the New Land
WHERE DID SWEDISH FINNS SETTLE IN THE USA?
SWEDISH FINNS FOUNDED TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES

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
For the many bachelors, fisherman, loggers, sawyers, railroad workers, carpenters, sailors... convivial social life centered on pay day once a month in the saloons.

The IOGT, or Independent Order of Good Templars, began organizing temperance groups among Scandinavians in 1882.

Immigrants from Finland formed the Finnish Temperance Brotherhood of America on that model in about 1885.

Swedish Finns who belonged to chapters of the FTBA formed new Swedish language temperance societies. Meetings were NOT conducted in English! Eventually an umbrella fraternal organization which offered some insurance benefits was founded.
1902

The various temperance societies united. Together they founded the Svensk Finsk Nykterhets Förening af Amerika
In 1902, temperance societies, some associated with the Finnish Society and some with IOGT, merged into their own Svensk-Finsk Nykterhetsförening af Amerika.

The number of lodges grew quickly. By 1908 there were 51 active societies.

By 1916, 8 societies had been established in the Eastern district, 31 in Central district, 7 in Mountain states, and 14 on the West Coast.
Morgonstjärnan No. 1, Ironwood, Mich.
Many believe that Swedish Finns settled in places which looked like home.

I believe they first got a job where they either had the strength, like quarries, or understood the resource, like timber, then utilized their skills, strengths, abilities. They capitalized on the environment, applying their life experience, and common sense and creativity, and pragmatism.

How else do we explain the dairy farmer born in Oravais who arrives in Leadville CO, working in a mining town at the elevation of 11,000 feet.

And the cowboys from Petalax who work for a while on the Lovelock NV ranch, then buy desert land next door and raise their 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
   Calumet, Michigan
   Ironwood, Michigan
   Negaunee, Michigan
1900—Boston, Massachusetts
The young men worked dangerous jobs for long hours. Illness and accidents could mean poverty or death.

There was no support system in the new world like the family back home and no insurance.

Burial costs and doctor’s fees could eat up a laborer’s small nest egg.

Immigrant sick benefit societies sought to provide even small sick benefits for those forced out of work.

The Bessemer sick benefit lodge began to plan a national association in 1898.
The lodge became a place for families.
In addition to building lodge halls, choirs were formed, gymnastics teams, drill teams for both men and women, dance teams, and district conventions were hosted by different lodges, at which the groups performed. Even bowling leagues were formed.

Lodge choruses gathered together and travelled ‘home’ to Finland, in 1930, 1956, 1966. In 1960 a choir from Finland toured the USA.

Still the membership numbers dropped.
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.
INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF RUNEBERG

PYLRIA LADIES CHORUS, SEATTLE 1922. MISS ALICE FORSELL, DIRECTOR
ARRIVAL AT AIRPORT IN HELSINGORS OF RUNEBERG EXCURSION AND CHORUS. JUNE 15, 1966.
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.
The Order of Runeberg inherited “Ledstjärnan” [The Leading Star] newspaper from the SFNF in 1920 when lodges merged to form ORDER OF RUNEBERG.

The most complete volumes in SFHS archives run from 1950 on. The archives is actively seeking earlier volumes, particularly from before the Order of Runeberg was formed!
NORTH AMERICAN ORDER OF RUNEBERG MEMBERSHIP

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
CANADIAN LODGES GREW AFTER 1925.

AS SWEDISH DIED OUT IN THE HOME, OFTEN DIRECT CONTACT WITH FINLAND DISAPPEARED. SOMETIMES THE FAMILY REMEMBERS THAT THE GRANDPARENTS SPOKE SWEDISH, SO THEY BELIEVE SWEDEN WAS THE OLD COUNTRY.

I HAD A PHONE CALL FROM A GENTLEMAN, WHO ACTUALLY SOUNDED FRUSTRATED AND IRATE. HE HAD LOOKED VERY CAREFULLY OVER THE ENTIRE MAP OF SWEDEN AND COULD NOT FIND VASA. YET AN OLD LETTER TO HIS FAMILY CLEARLY MENTIONED VASA.
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 been about 100 years since the sick benefit and temperance lodges united to form the Order of Runeberg. A lot of change in that century.

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION THIS AUGUST, A PROPOSAL WAS AGREED UPON BY DELEGATES TO DISSOLVE THE ORDER OF RUNEBERG, A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. MEMBERSHIP HAS CONTINUED TO FALL.

THOSE LODGES WITH HALLS STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN THE BUILDINGS. DOLLAR BAY’S HALL HAS BECOME A COMMUNITY CENTER.

SFHS is the official repository for Order of Runeberg records and lodge items. The Society will gladly reimburse persons who mail/ship lodge materials to the archive for preservation and study.
Let’s follow the migration pattern for Swedish Finns.

Young men were usually the first to venture into the unknown. Jobs like loggers, fishermen, quarrymen, boat builders, miners required strength and a willingness to work.

As a sawmill or harbor sparked the birth of a village, which grew into a town and families settled in, jobs for young women as maids, cooks, and laundresses opened up.

The ladies often married soon, and opened boarding houses, while their husbands held down a job. Or they ran the farm while their husband logged in the winter and followed the threshing crews in the summers.
DULUTH, 1890

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.
When disasters and upheaval struck the tightly knit community, concern for family members and the future rose quickly. Some decided it was time to find a more peaceful hometown.

Mines and logging to the west had opened up, and irrigation made new farmlands arable. Jobs in construction and boat building abounded as population centers flourished along the west coast.

Hoquiam and Aberdeen WA were developing with the timber industry about 1900, with sawmills and plywood factories. In 1907 Swedish Finns organized a temperance lodge in Hoquiam. In neighboring Aberdeen, an Order of Runeberg lodge was organized in 1923, and by 1929 they had merged. In the 20’s a lodge hall was built, they had a brass band, and a theater group, and met for forums on hot topics.

There were jobs to be had, and Frank Carlson landed in Grays Harbor to work
SWEDISH FINNS MOVE WEST

Sectional View showing Lumber Mill & Shipping Scene, Aberdeen, Wash.

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
A QUERY REQUESTING HELP IN SEARCHING FOR CONNECTIONS BACK TO THE FAMILY IN FINLAND IS RECEIVED FROM ABERDEEN WA.

A quick check of Ancestry.com’s US census shows Frank Carlson emigrated around 1915 to Aberdeen and worked in a plywood plant. He sent for his wife, Selma, and 5 children in 1921.

By 1940 he and his wife and youngest son are in California. Could this be a result of WWII industry? One of the daughters, Nellie Elvina Carlson, received her citizenship in 1938 in San Francisco.

Could she have joined the Order of Runeberg there? Let’s check on line.
# SFHS Databases Online

## The SFHS IKE Data Collections: Documenting Emigrants

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<th>No</th>
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### DEE Results

- Nyquist
- Nellie
- Lappfjärd
- San Francisco, California
- Lodge No. 104 Order of Runeberg, (1918)
- IOR (1898-1908) Memorabilia "Minneskrift" Anders M. Myhrman
There’s Nellie in DEE, AND her birth parish, Lappfjärd. With that key data, we can check TALKO for her family.

San Francisco ORDER OF RUNEBERG LODGE was one of the largest, with good reason. Swedish Finns had been living there from about 1849 on. They sailed the ships serving the Russian Alaska fur trade, and later American fishing and fur trading. The crews over-wintered in San Francisco. The ships were repaired, supplies were loaded, often the sailors had families in San Francisco.

From 1870 onward, San Francisco was a Port of Entry for Swedish Finns, like Ellis Island or Galveston Texas.
# TALKO DATABASE

Frans Konstantin Mannfolk  
AKA Frank C. Carlson

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<th>Descendants</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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**Småträsk Selma Sofia**  
Y: 1876 - 1970

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**Father**  
Småträsk Robert Johansson  
b. 28 Sep 1841

**Mother**  
Berg May Lena Jostenstör  
b. 11 Mar 1840

**Family ID**  
FB525  
[Group Sheet]

**Parents**  
Mannfolk Hans Konstantin  
d. 15 Apr 1874, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland

**Married**  
28 Dec 1899

**Children**  
1. Mannfolk Vilja Konstantin,  
b. 11 Jun 1900, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland  
d. 30 Dec 1925, USA
2. Mannfolk E.L.
3. Mannfolk Harry John  
b. 29 Nov 1903, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland
4. Mannfolk Nelly Ennem  
b. 12 Jun 1906, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland  
d. 29 Jun 1906, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland
5. Mannfolk N.E.
6. Mannfolk Vilja Rechst  
b. 17 Mar 1910, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland  
d. 11 Apr 1910, Lappland, Kristianstad, Finland
7. Linna
8. Linna
9. Mannfolk Torsten

**Family ID**  
FB521  
[Group Sheet]
TALKO was designed by SFHS webmaster Hasse Nygård, who invited Swedish Finn genealogists to send him their GED com. In return they received a password to access the collection. The TALKO database continues to grow, now with 2 million 70 thousand fifty SWEDISH FINN names.

Hasse has established the SFHS home page and its links, in order to make the SFHS collection of materials accessible to anyone.

Finlander Forum, his third site for SFHS, is a discussion forum of over 3,000 Members, with dozens of topics, which can include YOUR requests for information on family names. Register for free, and SAVE YOUR PASSWORD!

Hasse also established Facebook pages: “SFHS” FOR genealogy questions, and general commentary at “SFHS-Swedish-Finns”.

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.
From DEE Lodge records: Nellie Elvina Carlson from Lappfjärd FINLAND married Andrew Nyquist in San Francisco.

Her father FRANK CARLSON was born FRANS KONSTANTIN MANNFOLK of Lappfjärd. Frank’S father’s name was CARL so CARLSON became their name in

Without DEE and TALKO I could not have reconnected that family with their roots in Finland. And the two families, Nyquist and Carlson, illustrate very neatly the drift of migration westward.
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 Swede 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!