INTRODUCTION to "new Sweden '88" - A Prelude.

Presented by Gerald Heglund
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During these days in April, their Majesties, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia, are attending functions in New York City in observance of the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Swedes at Delaware.

Some weeks ago, your Program Committee invited a few of us to focus attention, very, very briefly, on the accomplishments of the Swedish immigrants to Jamestown, as a salute to the national celebration. We are grateful for this opportunity for we believe that our Swedish forefathers have made a difference in the establishment of our native city.

Reflecting on some of the characteristics displayed by the Swedes over the decades, yes, centuries, one observes that there is certainly a love for singing, and if it is in marching tempo, all the better. A favorite, for many years, is one which is taught in Grade School in Sweden - Hiking Song, known in Swedish as "Vi går över Daggstångta Berg", the English translation being found on the back of your programs. In recent years, the song has been found in English translation in elementary school music books throughout our country - and, there have been a few choral arrangements of it, as well. Listen to the melody and then let's all join in.

The morning is bright and we're gay, Fa-La-Ra!
We are happy to be out this lovely day, Fa-La-Ra!
We stride along with ease, charming birds out of the trees,
As we sing the songs we please.

The night shadows slowly close in, Fa-La-Ra!
We're so tired, we don't know just where we've been, Fa-La-Ra!
We stumble thro' the door;
we are weary and footsore,
But we'll sing one chorus more.
A love for singing was not the only facet of heritage which the emigrants brought with them. They revealed a faith which enabled them to surmount countless obstacles: 1- they brought with them a discipline of excellent workmanship; 2- an unflagging determination to become good Americans and so become builders of a young nation whose potential they sensed as limitless. Their genuinely, deeply-rooted faith in God provided the much-needed stabilization in the implantation of their transplanted roots.

We may ask: WHY did they come to these shores and WHY did they settle in communities such as Jamestown?

During the years 1853-1925, over a million Swedes (1,139,189 to be exact), had emigrated from Sweden to the United States. Dissatisfied with their lot which seemed to promise only more doses of the same daily monotony, year after year, the Swedes became easy prey for the colorful description which were contained in letters from the early emigrees, certainly exaggerated more often than not. These were called "Amerikabrev" or letters from America.

Robert Wright, author of Swedish Emigrant Ballads, points out in his Introduction that a character in Vilhelm Nöberg's When I Was A Child observed a special meaning in the word 'Amerika'. Dropping the vowel "a", one finds two Swedish words: 'mer' and 'rik', which literally means more rich.

Two fanciful impressions are recorded by Sweden's Nobel Prize authoress, Selma Lagerlöf, in her book Mårbacka, the name of her stately mansion in the countryside of Värmland. She relates of a crofter saying, "you've only to hit a rock with your stick and the rum will come spurtig out." (In America) you don't have to do dog's work at a manor, you've only to go to the woods and pull off an armful of leaves, and then you can buy yourselves whatever you want." Fanciful, yes, but the tillers of the soil chose to believe these tales for they gave them hope in their unbalanced economic structure.
which left no room for them becoming anything else but tillers of the soil. They wanted and needed to believe that somewhere there was a better way of life. America seemed to provide the answer.

The young men of Sweden learned that citizenship was granted automatically to all soldiers enlisting in the Union Army. As emigrants increased in number, recruiting agents decided this would be a good chance to pressure them into enlisting on board the ships. The American Consuls in both Sweden and Norway did not feel it beneath their position to tempt the Scandinavians. After the passing of the Homestead Act in 1862, the American Consul in Bergen translated it into Swedish and more bait was placed on the line of temptation.

Sometimes, a U. S. agent would promise free passage to America or grant the emigrant the opportunity to pay the cost of passage through an agreement of labor when the emigrant reached these shores. Dr. Bergstrand, in his excellent chapter on this subject to be found in the Saga from the Hills noted that this was the "pull" from this side of the Atlantic - the "push" came from unhappy circumstances on the other side of the Atlantic - in Sweden. **

The working class was disenchanted with the moral climate found among the members of the upper class in Sweden. Alcoholism had made strong inroads on society, in both the poor and the rich strata of society. An active temperance movement lent some impetus for the decision to emigrate.

Dissatisfaction with the State Church abounded. Those in disagreement with the rulings imposed by the State Church often experienced economic boy-

** Dr. Wilton L. Bergstrand, former pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Jamestown, N. Y., is author of the opening chapter in Saga from the Hills entitled, "What Brought the Swedish Immigrants to Jamestown?" A former National Youth Director for the former Augustana Lutheran Church of America, he was pastor for 20 years of Holy Trinity. While there he was recognized (four consecutive years) by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa., for his outstanding patriotic sermons, perhaps the most prominent being "Our Flag Speaks."
cotton and ostracism, loss of jobs, sometimes imprisonment and exile. In 1873, a law gave full religious freedom. While the intensity diminished, dissatisfaction prevailed. Religious revivals sprang up, some of them fostering a fanatical attitude towards life and to fellow men. This attitude gave impetus to a band of 1,500 in Småland, to emigrate with Eric Jansson to Illinois where the communistic-styled Bishop Hill Colony was established and which eventually disintegrated because of the philandering of the leader. In recent years, this colony has been restored and is now a tourist attraction. It is the residence for the archives of the Vasa Order of America, the largest Swedish-American fraternal order in America.

By the latter part of the 19th century, the Swedish Government registered a complaint to the U. S. that it "could not condone solicitation of soldiers by U. S. Consuls in Sweden". And the Government officials did, indeed, make it difficult for those who decided to emigrate. For quite a long period of time, the emigrant had to show a pastor's certificate of character which had to be stamped by the police. One emigrant, who was to become a governor of Minnesota, was obliged to pass an examination in Bible History and Catechism.

While it was difficult to leave the country, the voyage itself bordered on the traumatic. When the steamships came into existence in the early 1870s, the crossing was a trifle less difficult. In the plague-infested schooner, immigrants were crowded into small areas, oftentimes, having to remain below deck because of turbulent weather. Usually, the emigrants in the 19th century, carried food with them which, invariably, consisted of dark rye bread, salt pork, dried fish and meat. When coming ashore, many emigrants were robbed for there were no security guards posted at port of entry. Some abuses, we are told, were corrected in the middle of the 19th century when the state of New York took over the control of immigration.

For us, locally, we are interested in a small band of Swedish immigrants
who had been robbed and did get as far as Buffalo in August, 1846. Inventory of resources among them totalled twenty-five cents. They could not proceed further. With that amount of twenty-five cents, they bought some bread and sausage for the ten of them (two families and two unmarried men). They had to find work in order to continue their journey to Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Germund Johnson left their two daughters, Louise, 9, and Josephine, 7, at a public home in Buffalo. When they returned a few months later, they found that their daughters had become indentured servants, which as you know meant that they would work for a family until they were 18 years old. The older daughter was with the Thomas Struthers family in Warren, Pa., and the younger resided with the Robert Falconer family in Sugar Grove.

The concerned parents walked the 90 miles from Hamburg, N. Y., through the wilderness to visit their daughters. Happily, they found that the girls had excellent homes. They fell in love with the countryside for it resembled the part of Sweden from which they came - Hesselby or Hassel Valley. They remained a year and purchased a tract of land. Then, they returned to Buffalo.

Among those who had remained in Buffalo was a Samuel Dahl who had journeyed westward to check out the situation of the area where the group had originally intended to go. Upon his return, he told of the poor drinking water which made a deep impression on the little colony of Swedes which had now increased by at least eight new arrivals. The Germund Johnsons told of the abundance of springs with freshest and purest of water as well as large wooded areas from which they could obtain lumber for buildings, barns, and houses. They also spoke enthusiastically of the lakes in the area of Southwestern New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. The group voted to head southward to this region.

The twenty Swedes became the founders of the community known as Chandlers Valley. In 1856, they organized a church, named, appropriately, the Hassel Valley Lutheran Church. This church was, in time, to have a Swedish pastor,
the Rev. Jonas Swensson, who would serve also the First Lutheran Church in Jamestown, which was also organized in 1856.

Among the early Swedes was 18-year-old Johanna Charlotte Johnson who came to Jamestown on June 9, 1849, and found employment in Falconer, N. Y. with the Patrick Falconers. In time, she met Anders Frederick Peterson, better known as Frank Peterson. They were married November 18, 1852, in the American Methodist Church in Jamestown. When the First Lutheran Church was organized in Jamestown, they became pillars of that church. They were the paternal grandparents of Mrs. Harguerite Hultquist, whose husband, Earle O. Hultquist, was the president of the Jamestown Royal Upholstery Co. for several decades. (This furniture manufacturer remains one of the very few in this area, still known for its excellent furniture products).

As previously noted, the Rev. Jonas Swensson served as pastor of both the Swedish Lutheran congregations in Jamestown and Hessel Valley. Swensson was a well-educated pastor who sometimes walked and sometimes drove a horse and buggy between the two churches - a distance of about 14 miles. It is told that before the First Lutheran Church was built in Jamestown, the Swedish settlers walked the distance of 14 miles to attend worship services at Hessel Valley. At Christmas time, they would rise at 2 a.m. on Christmas morn to walk this distance to be among those raising their voices in the traditional chorale sung as the opening hymn of the Julotta Service (Christmas Matins).

"Var hälsad sköna morgonstund?" is known in its English translation as "All Hail to Thee, O Blessed Morn."

During Pastor Swensson's relatively short pastorate, his son, Carl Aaron, was born in Chandler's Valley. Carl seemed destined to become one of the outstanding pioneer leaders in the Augustana Synod, later to known as the Augustana Lutheran Church of America. It was Carl who initiated the movement.
to build Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, and it was he, who with his wife, Alma, organized the Messiah Chorus at the college, whose membership includes town folk as well as college faculty and students. This Chorus has, over the decades, become world-acclaimed for its performances of Handel's "The Messiah" on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

In recent years, the days during Holy Week feature concerts by famous singers and instrumentalists, some who sometimes appear as soloists in the "Messiah" performances. If one visits Lindsborg at this time of year, a visit to the Birger Sandzen Memorial Art Museum is a "must." Sandzen was hired to come from Sweden to teach Art and to assist with the oratorio presentation. He often appeared as tenor soloist. Sandzen's lithographs can be found in several Jamestown homes, incidentally.

The Svensssons received their inspiration for the "Messiah" presentation from hearing the premiere performance by the Augustana College Chorus in Moline, Illinois, a neighboring town of Rock Island.

Of local interest in this inspiring presentation is the fact that the late Samuel Thorstenberg, who served First Lutheran Church, 1909-34, as organist-choirmaster, was, for eleven years, director of the Messiah presentations at Bethany College where sometimes he assumed the role of bass soloist. On April 30, significantly, the Jamestown Choral Society, which he founded, will present a Samuel Thorstenberg Memorial concert with a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah."

Other educational institutions built by Swedish immigrants include, of course, Augustana College, the first college to be built by Swedish immigrants in the year 1860, Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, Ursala College in East Orange, New Jersey, Luther College (a Junior College absorbed by Midland College) in Wahoo, Nebraska, which is the alma mater of the
world-renowned Swedish-American, Dr. Howard Hanson, who was the first director of the famed Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He was known as an outstanding educator, conductor, and composer. The members of the Swedish Mission Covenant Church founded North Park College in Chicago and the Swedish Baptists founded Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Numerous hospitals carry the name Swedish Hospital, among them being one in Chicago and another in Minneapolis. Augustana Lutherans founded Bethphage Mission, a haven for the handicapped and wildly emotionally-disturbed patients, and also Deaconess Institute and Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. Jamestown's own Gustavus Adolphus Children's Home, which celebrated its Centennial two years ago, was first superintended by John Svensson, brother of Carl Aaron Svensson, and his wife, Gerie.

It is interesting to note that the Lutheran colleges I have mentioned all have a world-honored tradition of superb choral singing. Perhaps, this may tell you something about the Swedes' love for singing.

Many songs from the homeland have found their way into the choral and vocal literature of America. One of the favorites is the plaintive melody which conveys the love of the natives of this province rich in folklore and chivalry, - Värmland. The song is entitled, "Ack, Värmland du "Påne!" There are those who regard it as Sweden's second national anthem. Today, we will hear it played as a trumpet solo by Harold Olson and you will note the melancholy beauty which it possesses. (The Swedish and English translation of the first and last stanzas is read at this point).

(Following the musical selection)......And now, three other speakers will come to the lecturn to share some of their thoughts on their assigned subjects. Nebel Anderson is one of our fire principals from the Jamestown schools, now retired, Paul Johnson is an attorney associated with the law of-
Jennie Vimerstedt is the veteran journalist from the Post Journal where she chalked up a record 48 years as reporter plus another two years with the Office of War Information in New York City and the Red Shield Club in Philadelphia during World War II. She is one of two American women who has received the Order of Vasa med in recognition for her contributions to the Swedish-American community here in Jamestown.

Later in the program, because the participants had run over the allotted time, a report on Jamestown-born artists and Swedish-American artists born in Sweden was given in utmost brevity. These included Hugo Nicholson, Elmer Holmberg, Etof Lundgren, Carl Lindblad, and Birger Halvarson. Of especial interest, naturally, was reference to Roger Tory Peterson and Cecile Ryden Johnson.

The social hall at the Salvation Army lent itself well to the hanging of reproductions and paintings by these professional and amateur artists which also included an original by Gerald Heglund.

The program closed with the singing of the hymn, indigenous of all Swedish-American congregations throughout the United States and other countries where Swedish emigrants settled - "Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara" (Children of the Heavenly Father). Also included was an English translation of "Hölsa dem Därhemma" (Greetings to the Homeland) by Heglund.