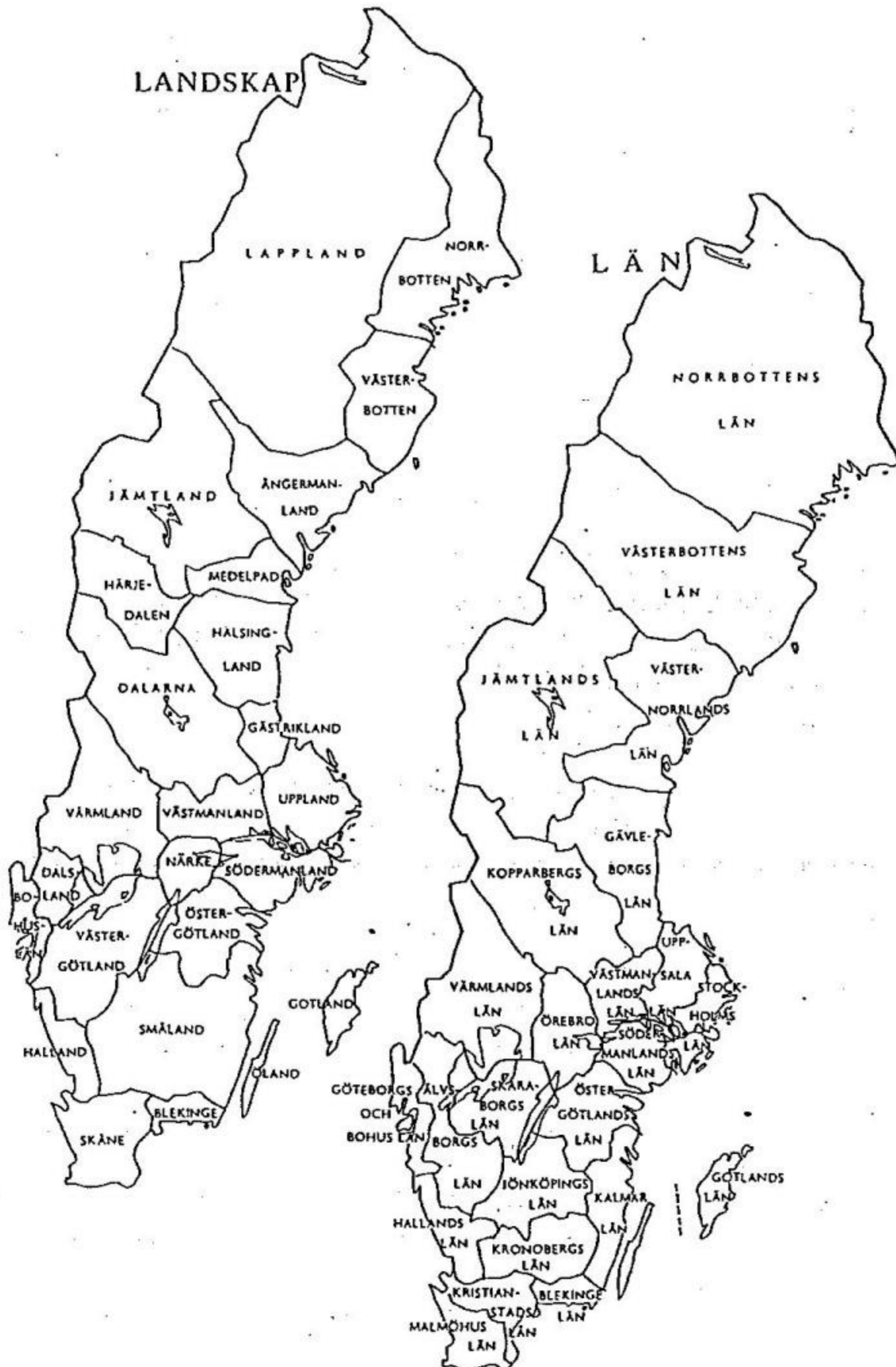


Historical Information on August Johnson and Lydia Helin and their Families. Supplement:

I. Divisions of Sweden:

The two outline maps below show the divisions of Sweden. Landskaps (provinces) are geographical units. Läns (districts) are the administrative units.



II. The fiction story, "THE EMIGRANTS" gives interesting background:

As part of my research about my grandfather and grandmother who came from Sweden, I looked into this well researched fiction story of Swedish emigrants by Moberg.

In the 1950's, Vilhelm Moberg, a Swedish novelist, wrote (in Swedish) a series of historical novels about emigrants from Sweden which sold well in Sweden. Four of these were translated into English and they sold well here in the USA also. In 1993, we found all four in our King County Library here in the Seattle area.

Synopsis of Moberg's Story:

"THE EMIGRANTS" is the first book in the series. Karl Oskar Nilsson with his wife Kristina and their children are the main family of characters in the series. In Moberg's story, Karl Oskar is the first one to leave Småland for the USA. They begin their trip April 4, 1850 from the crossing at Åkerby. This first book takes them from Småland in Sweden to the USA.

Besides the Nilssons there are other lesser characters in the books. The emigrant characters named in the book total 16 (counting the Nilssons) who came from Ljuder parish in Småland. This first book shows the reasons why each one decided to leave.

The first book also gives background of what Sweden was like in 1850. Religious life in Sweden was very regulated at that time. The Lutheran church was the state church. Since the church was an arm of the government, the parish dean had rule over all religious matters in the parish. To administer communion at one's own house without being ordained was not tolerated. It seems that it was even forbidden in some areas to read the Bible at home to your family!

Farms were mostly all small. They had been subdivided enough times that they were too small to produce enough for a family of any size unless the crops were always bumper crops. The ground was very rocky and so all land that could be cultivated was already under cultivation. The rest could only be used for pasture or growing trees.

Karl's reason for leaving was that he was getting deeper in debt the longer he tried to farm. He was a young man in his 20s with only 4 years on the farm which he got from his parents. He was independent minded which contributed to his being willing to be the first family from his parish to immigrate. His younger brother had also gotten the idea and others also decided to go as well for other reasons as plans took shape for the trip. In all, 15 from Småland arrived in the USA in this book.

They sailed from the port of Karlshamn April 14, 1850. They sailed with a total of 87 passengers on the Brig CHARLOTTA. This boat used sail power only. It was 124 feet long and 20 feet wide. It had a crew of 15 and was loaded with pig iron and other sundry freight. The passengers were all in very cramped makeshift quarters in the hold. Their trip took longer than usual because of poor sailing weather. They landed in New York harbor on June 23, 1850 after a total of 70 days at sea! The book

describes their hardships at sea including the burial at sea of 8 passengers who died including one from their group from Småland: the oldest man.

The second book, "UNTO A GOOD LAND", describes the trip from New York harbor to the place they choose to homestead in Minnesota.

They sailed up river from New York harbor to Albany on a river steamer with a paddle wheel in the rear. Then they traveled by train from Albany to Buffalo. There they took a steamer across the great lakes to Chicago. In Chicago, they took another boat down the Illinois river to the Mississippi river. There they took a river steamer up to Stillwater, Minn. This is near Minneapolis, Minn. They arrived there July 31, 1850. So their trip took them a total of 15 1/2 weeks!

In the remainder of this book they pick out a spot to homestead a few miles from Stillwater and build a log house to winter in.

In his third book, "THE SETTLERS" he tells of them building their houses, more people moving into the area, and generally getting established. He includes stories of conflict with the Indians.

In his fourth book, "LAST LETTER HOME" he completes the story of the principle characters including the death of Kristina and Karl Oskar.

Parallels and contrasts between the Nilssons and my grandparents.

SIMILARITIES:

Its interesting that the Nilssons got off the river steamer in Stillwater, Minn and then went a little farther to find their land to settle on in 1850. And my grandmother went to Stillwater to live with her sister when she first went to the States in 1891. By then, Stillwater was a prosperous town with good houses, jobs, churches, schools, etc. Later she moved West and married August.

1. Stillwater, Minn was the frontier in 1850. Shelton, Wash was the frontier in 1891. The loggers were there ahead of the settlers in both places.
2. Both men aimed to farm, not be loggers. They were looking for land to settle on and raise a family. (not to get rich off logging or mining gold, etc.)
3. They both came from similar conditions in Sweden. The farms they had known there were small and crowded together with poor soil. August had helped on his father's farm, though he had not had one of his own in Sweden before he left. (Moberg tells of the hardships for the Nilssons on their farm such as digging rocks out of the fields by hand. This is the story that August and his sisters told their children.)
4. They came from the same area of Småland. Karl Oskar and Kristina are from Ljuder parish. (Though August lived in Linneryd parish, he attended church in Ljuder since that church was closer to the village

of Heddamåla where he lived than the church in Linneryd. Grandma Annie lived in the village of Vida in Ljuder.)

5. When they got their own land in America, they both found themselves in a new land which was sparsely settled where the farms were usually 160 acres (sometimes more). They dug rocks out of their fields in Sweden. Here they cut trees and dug out the stumps to clear fields.

6. They raised everything they needed off their own farms with a few exceptions. I have not heard of August and his family making their own cloth, however, though this was done in Moberg's story. Obtaining the things you didn't have from your own farm often involved bartering.

7. In 1850 when Moberg's story is cast, the state church in Sweden had professional clerics who were in charge of all religious activities. (This had changed to allow more freedom by the time August was born.) When they reached the USA, there were no churches close enough to attend, at least not regularly. Now their religion must become something you do yourself or go without it. Karl Oscar didn't do much. But August Johnson held a Sunday School for his own family so they would receive this teaching, since there was no church. In the story, a church is eventually built in the Swedish community Karl Oskar is a part of in Minnesota. Kristina is pictured as faithful there.

CONTRASTS:

1. Steam power was better developed in 1891 when August and Annie came. They benefitted from this in that their trip took much less time. They left Gothenburg (Not Karlshamn) April 17, 1891 on the "ARIOSTO". This ship was no doubt larger than the CHARLOTTA. It sailed to Hull, England. There were 100 other passengers on board sailing to the USA also. From Hull, they crossed England to Liverpool by train, and then took a larger steam ship to New York. Then they travelled by train to their destinations. We estimate that August and Annie's trip took about 4 weeks instead of the 15 1/2 weeks in Moberg's story.

2. In 1850, people had begun using the Oregon Trail to reach the West Coast from the Missouri river. This was a 6 month walk which had to be done in the summer. Had the Nilssons wanted to get to the West, their trip would have taken twice as long as it did. The transcontinental railroads of the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific had changed this dramatically by the time August came to the USA.

3. Karl Oskar and his group purchased tickets for each leg of their trip across America as they travelled. However, when August and Annie came, they purchased a ticket with segments for each leg of the trip before they left Sweden. We saw such a ticket in the museum in Liverpool.

Note that the International time zones were established in 1884, making it easier to schedule trains, and ships, etc.

4. Karl Oskar made his trip with his wife and children. August and Annie waited to get married and start their family until after August had gotten the land and built a log cabin. Then she came west and they were married. Their first child was born Dec 13, 1895. Making their trip and getting established

somewhat while they were still single made it much easier than if they had had small children like Karl and Kristina.

5. Before August left Sweden, a revival had touched many in Sweden including the family which August came from. As a result, he taught his children the Word of God in their own home. His siblings left in Sweden had a vital faith also. (Kristina is pictured as being religious but Karl Oskar is pictured as being only nominal in his faith and sometimes he questions God outright.)

6. Home meetings became legal in Sweden in 1858, by the time August was born. The revival in that area of Småland began a group known as EFS which established "Prayer Chapels" around the parish. Their English name is "The Swedish Evangelical Mission". These EFS groups continued to use these for a number of years and remained on a friendly basis with the State Church, supplementing the services there with Bible Studies, Prayer meetings, and Youth Activities in the Prayer Chapels. The EFS groups also sent missionaries to Africa and India. (August's sister Maria and his brother Johannes and their families were very active in the EFS groups after August left.) This level of freedom did not exist in the time of Karl Oskar.

7. In 1850 though some things were available in print in Sweden about the US, there was a wealth of this material available in 1891 when August and Annie left. After the Northern Pacific Railroad was completed to Tacoma in 1883, agents in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe advertised fares and the desirable areas to be settled in the Northwest to attract emigrants as customers. We believe August and Annie got their tickets for their trip through such an agent.

8. In the book, Kristina is reluctant at first to leave Sweden. But Annie may have been better prepared to leave than August since most of her family had already left for the States. All the members of her family eventually went to the States including her parents, though her parents and some of the others later returned to Sweden.

9. The statue of Liberty was built in 1886 (after Karl Oskar came) and was there to greet August and Annie when they made their trip. Castle Gardens was in use to process emigrants in 1891. This must have been an improvement over the scene in New York harbor that greeted those who came in 1850. (Ellis Island replaced Castle Gardens in 1892.)

10. Nilssons settled near other Swedes, but August had only the Helins as Swedish neighbors at first. (There were a few other Swedes in the Skokomish Valley when he moved there.) It seems August turned to English and helped teach his children to speak it.)

11. Karl Oskar is shown as willing to join the military in the US, (to fight in the Civil War) but his wife Kristina is a "conscientious objector". It seems both August and Annie were conscientious objectors. Only their oldest son Arvid was obliged to serve in the military (World War I) and he served as a male nurse. He didn't go to war, however, as the war ended before he could be sent overseas.

12. Moberg depicts an Indian uprising in which several Swedish settlers are killed who are friends of the Nilssons. In the areas where August settled, the Indian questions had been settled before he arrived so there was very little contact and no problems between the Indians and their family.

OTHER NOTES:

I. Moberg includes a number of passages where he uses language which I wish he had left out. Our relatives in Sweden told us that when the books were first published in Sweden there was objection to this content there as well. After reading a few such passages in the first book, I skipped over passages I suspected were more of the same in the second book. I read a little of the third and quit there because I felt I had learned all I could use from his books. Because of the language he includes in places, the books are not good family fare so I don't recommend them.

II. Moberg doesn't write from a Christian perspective. He doesn't distinguish between (1) those who were "religious fanatics" or "cults" (2) those who were "religious", and (3) those who were true "evangelicals" or born again Christians as we would call them today. He includes characters from categories 1 and 2 and no doubt some of these characters were truly evangelical.

III. Two movies were made from these. The English versions are called "THE EMIGRANTS" and "THE NEW LAND." They were filmed in Swedish and were shown in Scandinavia, of course. They were also dubbed into English for use here in the States. (The dubbing is expertly done. You can seldom detect that the actors are not actually speaking English.) The English versions came out in 1971 and 1972. Herbert Helin saw at least one of them in a theater in Elma when they first came out and he liked it. It was the first time he ever went to a movie. Liv Uhlman (Norwegian) is the lead actress and plays the part of Kristina and Max von Sydow (Swedish) plays the part of Karl Oskar. The movies have been shown on TV in the USA. We saw them on video. (available from Warner Video) The movies earn their PG rating for the language in a few places.

IV. His books and the movies based on them have captured the interest of the Swedish people, both those who left and those who stayed. Since over 1.2 million Swedes left between 1850 and 1920, (20% of the population) there are many in Sweden and many here in the States who have an interest in those on the other side. These stories and his characters appeal to those with this special interest in both places. The key is, Moberg's characters are representative of those who left.

V. In Vaxjo, a major town in Småland, there is a very good Museum called "The House of Emigrants". (This houses a research center as well.) This museum now has a Moberg room. There is a statue of his two principle characters, Karl and Kristina, in Karlshamn and a replica of it in Minnesota. We saw a small size replica of this statue in the museum. At the crossing in Åkerby where he has the characters in his book meet to leave, a huge boulder has been erected as a monument. Our cousin Ivan wrote a poem in Swedish which was read at the inauguration of this monument in 1975. We saw the house Karl and Kristina are said to have lived in before they left. It is maintained as a museum of that era with the kind of kitchen in use then, the kind of farm implements from that era, etc.

VI. The setting for his story in Sweden is within a couple of miles of where August Johnson grew up. August's sister, Maria, moved to a home located only a few meters from the Åkerby crossing. Later their brother Johannes and some of his sons lived in two houses next door. Our cousin Ivan was born there and grew up in that area.

III. Poem about the exodus of the Swedish Immigrants:

Among Smaland's parishes there is one
which hardly has it's equal.
It's name is Ljuder and with stone
it has been clothed as the realm of rock.

It's rocks broke the old people apart.
They weighed and they bent
but never during their lifetimes
did they see an end to them.

It was a fight against shortage and destitution
where the rock was in between.
It bound the earth that gave them bread.
It covered the source itself.

And even though people of Smalandish stock
are known as a hardy race,
in time of failed crops they soon discovered
that no strength was enough.

So they stood there on the brink of starvation,
Nature's guests of charity.
When news came of a better land.
A rock-free - Far away in the West.

The most daring were ready at once.
"We leave the rocky Homestead!" (or Hell)
From now on they were not satisfied any more.
"We have to go there and see it!"

But others got in a Quandary.
"Certainly our Ljuder is lacking
but soon times should get better."
And, "Think of all we'll miss!"

"Yes, Father and Mother and neighbor, friend.
Will we ever see them again?
Here in our lives again
if we leave them now?"

There was a split, There was a strife.
One arrived at divided opinions.
It was not easy to forever
leave the company of one's family.

Utvandringen från Ljuder

Bland Smålands socknar finns det en
som knappast har sin like
Dess namn är Ljuder och med sten
den klätts till Stenens Rike

Dess stenar bröt de gamle opp
de vägde och de bände
men aldrig under livets lopp
de såg på dem en ände

Det var en kamp mot brist och nöd
där stenen var emellan
Den band den mark som gav dem bröd
dem täckte själva källan

Och trots att folk av småländsk stam
är känt som härdat släkte
i missväxttid de snart förnam
att inga krafter räckte

Så stod de där på svältens rand
naturens nådegäster
då budet kom om bättre land -
ett *stenfritt* - långt i väster

De djärvsta var med ens till reds
"Vi lämnar stenahiet!"
Från nu de var ej mer tillfreds
"Vi måste dit och si'et!"

Men andra kom i bryderi
"Nog har vårt Ljuder brister
men snart ska det väl bättre bli"
och "Tänk på allt vi mister!"

"Ja, far och mor och grannel, vän
ska vi dem nånsin råka
här i vårt liv en gång igen
om vi nu från dem åka?"

Det blev till split, det blev till strid
man kom till delad mening
Ej var det lätt att för all tid
gå ur sin släkts förening

Info on August and Lydia - Supplement

They debated the question. But
in the district the adversity spread
and in it's footsteps soon followed the one
who has been given the name "Death".

Then they felt that it was enough -
They had stopped hoping -
and out from homesteads and village they went.
A stream too large to be stopped.

America was their goal.
The distant new world.
And nobody who went there was stingy -
They sold all for the trip.

For rescue on a stormy sea
The ship was now the guarantee.
But still many went to their graves
out there in the Atlantic.

For even though the ship was watertight
it was a trip of torment.
When wind and sea claimed their dues
and strength gave out.

And days came and days went.
They lost their will to live
until in the West they caught sight of
the American coast.

There was the country they believed in.
And for which they all reached!
There was the country. The slender straw
to which their hope stretched.

And shortly they arrived
and discovered in no time
that the people there were quite good.
But the dialect was difficult.

There still remained a journey
to find the promised land
which then freely was given to men.
To peoples in flight from the Nordic countries.

De grunnade på frågan, men
i bygden spred sig nöden
och i dess spår snart följde den
som givits namnet Döden

Då kände de att det var nog -
de hade slutat hoppas -
och ut från gård och by de drog
en ström för stor att stoppas

Amerika var deras mål
den fjärran, nya världen
och ingen som för dit var snål -
de sålde allt för färden

För räddning på ett stormigt hav
blev skeppet nu garanten
men ändå mången fick sin grav
där ute i Atlanten

För om än skeppet höll sig tätt
blev det en färd i pina
då vind och sjö tog ut sin rätt
och kraften ville sina

Och dagar kom och dagar gick
de miste levnadslusten
tills de i väst i sikte fick
amerikanska kusten

Där var det land de trodde på
och som dem alla räcktes!
Där var det land, det smala strå
till vilket hoppet sträcktes!

Och de var framme inom kort
och gjorde strax upptäckten
att folket där var ganska gott
men svår var dialekten

Nu återstod en resa än
att finna löftesjorden
som då för intet gavs åt män
ur folk i flykt från Norden

They went inland by train,
by boat, and horse and carriage.
And there along the way there were obstacles
to obstruct the virgin land.

But the day came when they saw their goal
and the bottom of their hearts was touched.
For there was a place for steely scythes
to harvest a future.

There were rocks here as well -
Yes, they saw several already -
but the way it was in Ljuder
it would probably never be again.

From the trunks of the forest they built homes
and earth was broken up and turned.
And soon by sowing and sun and light,
to life and hope they were ignited.

But all they did reminded
of Swedish culture and habits.
And often home to Sweden's spring
the thoughts wanted to go.

So time fled, this stream
that never, never turns.
And their lives like in a dream
quickly ran by the shores.

Until old age, in every-day struggles
to secure the children's future.
With them there was only this one law:
Don't fear any obstacles!

When strength failed them and ended.
From the children they received care
until one day they got to rest
in the quiet of the cemetery.

The settlers from Ljuder died.
But the children had heard of the country
and thousands of miles were not enough
to tear that tie.

De inåt landet for med tåg
med båt och häst med kärra
och där på vägen hinder låg
att jungfrulandet spärra

Men dagen kom, de såg sitt mål
och hjärtans djup var rörda
för där fanns plats för liars stål
att dem en framtid skörda

Väl fanns det stenar också här -
ja, de såg redan flera -
men som i Ljuder på långt när
blev det nog aldrig mera

Av skogens stam de byggde hus
och jord bröts upp och vändes
och snart av sådd och sol och ljus
till liv och hopp de tändes

Men allt de gjorde rönkte spår
av svensk kultur och vana
och ofta hem till Sveriges vår
sig tanken ville bana

Så svann då tiden, denna ström
som aldrig, aldrig vänder
och deras liv liksom i dröm
flöt snabbt förbi dess stränder

Till ålderns höst, i kamp var dag
att barnens framtid trygga
hos dem fanns endast denna lag:
För inga hinder rygga!

När draften svek dem och tog slut
av barnen fick de vården
tills de en dag fick vila ut
i ron på kyrkogården

Nybyggarna från Ljuder dog
men barnen hört om landet
och tusen mil, det var ej nog
att slita av det bandet

Even today there is a branch.
Which has its trunk in Ljuder.
And although the root has hit against rock
it still has its strength.

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Let us, as in the poem, dwell upon
that people which must not be forgotten.
And see the destitution that in earlier times
forced the villages to be emptied.

In memory and as a symbol for those
who poor have been forced
to leave relatives and homes.
A rock has been erected and inscribed.

A rock that the farmer has quarried, broken.
To separate it from earth.
A rock against which though
his strength and hot desire have not been enough.

Yes, maybe just that one was too big
for anyone in a group
of people in times of poverty
who had to leave the district.

Ivan Johansson.
By the inauguration of a stone monument
to remind of the emigrants to America.
Åkerby, Ljuder parish, Sweden, 1975

Ännu i dag finns där en gren
som har sin stam i Ljuder
och fastän roten stött mot sten
den än sin kraft tillbjuder

- 0 -

Låt oss, som dikten, dröja vid
det folk som ej får glömmas
och se den nöd som förr i tid
kom byarna att tömmas

Till minne och symbol för dem
som fattiga har drivits
att så gå ut från släkt och hem
en sten har rests och skrivits

En sten som bonden brutit, bräckt
att den från jorden skilja
en sten mot vilken dock ej räckt
hans kraft och heta vilja

Ja, kanske blev just den för stor
för någon i en skara
av fattigtidens Ljuderbor
som fick från bygden fara

Ivan Johansson

By the inauguration of a stone monument
to remind of the emigrants to America.
Åkerby, Ljuder parish, Sweden, 1975