

En Jägarsång

One-hundred and eighty-two years ago and less than a half mile from here, Swedish immigrants claimed land and settled on it. Deep in winter of that year of 1842, Kee-wah-goosh-kum, leader of a nearby Potawatomi community invited three of these settlers to join him to hunt deer with his men. The Swedes included Carl Groth, my great-great grandfather George Bergwall, and Carl's farming and land claim partner, Gustaf Unonius—Gustaf is the author of a story I am about to tell in condensed form.

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Gustaf's Story:

Once again, Kee-wah-goosh-kum, with part of his tribe had pitched camp a few miles north of Pine Lake... we got to get to be on such a friendly footing with the tribe... that we went on a hunting party together—a favor... an Indian seldom shows a white man.

...there was an abundance of deer in the neighborhood. The ground was covered with deep snow.

After walking north for an hour, Kee-wah-goosh-kum told us to separate and go in different directions which meant that the hunt was now to begin.

Bergwall, who like a mighty hunter found himself greatly interested in the sport, started off in one direction, Carl in another, and I to the far shore of a frozen lake. The chief and his associates disappeared like spirits in the woods.

I killed a Linx and skinned it before the others rendezvoused with me. Carl and Bergwall each killed bucks—Bergwall's the biggest we had seen, weighing at least 220 pounds.

The sun set by the time we and our red friends had finished our evening meal around the campfire. In a clear and starlit night and in both single file and deep silence, we started our march home.

The silence became so boring that Bergwall, in his deep and full voice, began to sing, whereupon the three of us made the forest re-echo with Atterbom's beautiful Hunters' Song and found with the poet Florio that "even hunting and winter have their glories."

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You can gain access to the complete story of this hunt by either using weblinks we'll put on the flash-drives that some of you brought with you today, or by using the webpages of the Swedish American Historical Society.

Now... My grand-nephew Pierce and his grandmother, my sister Margie, will sing Atterbom's Hunter's Song.



Oil Painting of Young George Bergwall
Hunting in Sweden with Dog