

Swedish American Historical Society of Wisconsin, Inc.

MAY 2025



COMING EVENTS

May 17, 2025-History of Swedish Sami people
June 7, 2025-Swedish Genealogy Research
June 22, 2025-Midsommar at Heidelberg Park
Sept. 13, 2025-Unonius Celebration

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1:30 PM—THE HISTORY OF SWEDISH SAMI PEOPLE—Martin Luther Lutheran Church, 9235 W Bluemound Road, Milwaukee

SAHSWI member Michaela Yukus will present the program about the Swedish Samis-- one of the world's indigenous peoples and one of Sweden's official national minorities.

Sami country – known as Sápmi – stretches across the northern parts of Sweden, Norway and Finland, and Russia's Kola Peninsula. The original settlement was even larger, but the indigenous Sami were gradually forced to give up land, first to farmers starting in the 1650s and later to industries such as forestry and mining. (Reference: Sweden.se)



After the presentation enjoy **traditional Fika the Swedish way**. If you can, bring a dish to share. Do you have a favorite Swedish recipe you want to share? If so, bring it and we can add it to the website Swedish **Food Heritage** page.

A SWEDISH AUTHOR WRITES ABOUT AMERICA—

Fredrika Bremer, who was born in Finland in 1801 but grew up near Stockholm, was the daughter in a well-to-do family. Educated at home, she started writing in the 1820s and her novels were very popular.

In 1849, she went to America to find out about the country. She was an avid learner and wanted to know about issues like abolition, women's education, and other social issues. Her writings about America were published in *The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America*.

Following are some of her writings about Pine Lake, Wisconsin. "On the morning of the 29th of September 1850, I arrived at the first Swedish colony of the West." She had been driven there by Oscar Lange of Milwaukee and found that a half dozen families still lived in the Pine Lake colony. Gustav Unonius had left after receiving his degree from Nashotah

(cont. on next page.)

Seminary. Most families still lived in log houses and didn't seem very prosperous. An exception was Mr. Bergman, a smith, who also farmed several acres of good land and was able to make improvements to his log house. His young wife did all the household chores and cooking and the care of her four-week-old baby with only the help of her sister.

Fredrika describes the dinner party she attended at the Bergman's as "Better than many a one which I had eaten in the great and magnificent hotels of America." She enjoyed the cordial hospitality and the "beautiful Swedish language spoken by everyone."

Later during a walk, Mrs. Bergman admitted that there were many difficulties, including the lack of hired help, both male and female. Even high-paid labor was scarce.

Another visit was to the home of the Widow Petterson where they were invited for coffee. Her house resembled a peasant cottage near Årsta in Sweden and had a beautiful view of almost the entire lake. Mrs. Petterson, though not quite 50, was severely aged by years of hard work; yet she was known as a "magnificent warm-hearted gossip who loves to entertain her friends with good cheer."

Mr. Patterson had started as a farmer in Pine Lake, but the couple was not used to the hard work of farming, and their land was very poor. He took up shoemaking and was able to provide a livelihood for the family. He died a few years before Fredrika's visit.

Despite the difficulties of living in Pine Lake, Mrs. Petterson did not regret having come to America because "as regarded her children and their future, she saw a new world opened to them, richer and happier than that which the mother country could have offered them."

To provide for her company, Mrs. Petterson had put together "a capital entertainment; incomparably good coffee and tea especially, good venison, fruit, tarts and many good things." Twenty-one Swedes enjoyed the repast and hospitality and the games, songs, and dancing.

[Note: Fredrika refers to the Bergmans in the beginning and then changes their name to Bergvall. The endnotes imply that they are the same as there was no one named Bergman in Pine Lake records.]

In the morning, Fredrika said goodby to the inhabitants of Pine Lake and left feeling optimistic about their future. "A new Scandinavia shall one day bloom in the valley of the Mississippi in the great assembly of the people there, with men and women, games, and songs, and dances, with days as gay and as innocent as this day at Pine Lake.

(From the Swedish American Genealogist, Volume XXXIV, March 2014.)

STUBBORN SWEDE -THE FATHER OF WATER SKIING-

In the summer of 1922 on Lake Pepin, a part of the Mississippi River, an innovation was made that would change the way many in Wisconsin and around the world would spend their summers. Ralph Samuelson was 18 years old at the time, and was the son of Maria Larsson who emigrated from Grums in Värmland, Sweden. He decided that if one can ski on snow, it can also be done on water. Even though the local people thought he was crazy, Ralph did not give up. He built a progression of skis of various sizes—lengths and widths—trying to find skis

that would keep him up on the water. Finally success came and he was able to glide across the water, much to his joy and to the amazement of the people who were watching.

Present water skiers would be equally amazed at the sight of his first skis that barely resemble modern ones—they were much longer, wider, and heavier. But history had been made and a new sport created. Ralph is officially recognized as the father of water-skiing and also of other new water sports such as wakeboard.

Ralph Samuelson attributed his “Swedish stubbornness” as the secret to his achievement. He went on to spending a great deal of time performing on water skis.

Despite their initial scepticism, Lake City residents now take great pride in being known as “The birthplace of water-skiing. There is a marker explaining his success at the marina and a sculpture of a water skier taking a curve and spraying water is on the shore. Every summer, the stubborn Swedish-American is honored with a festival and, weather permitting, a performance by highly skilled water skiers.

Ralph Samuelson’s story is told in the book *A Daredevil & Two Boards* by Gregor Ziemer, which is available on Amazon.

Thanks to Tommy Hellström and *Sweden & America*.

FROM THE MARCH FIKA MEETING--FÄBODKULTUR

Brent Erickson, SAHSWI member and Linde Lodge President Brent Erickson presented about Fäbodar and the practice of Summer Farming. This practice has existed in Sweden and Norway for thousands of years. Fäbodkultur is a UNESCO-Listed Heritage of Traditional Summer Farming.

Dalarna fäbod stuga now at Dergården



Summer Farming refers to the practice of moving livestock to outlying lands in late spring. It entails knowledge concerning animal husbandry and herding, dairy production, land management and handicrafts. It also involves herding calls, songs, storytelling and rituals. Summer farms may be private or collectively run, and some organize sustainable tourism and sell dairy products. The practice has inspired literature, performing and visual arts. It is a source of pride, continuity and identity for many Scandinavian societies.

Brent discussed his family ties to this unique culture. He is a descendent of Der Erik Jakobson, (Der referred to the farm named Dergården). Der Erik Jacobssons daughter Sarah was Brent’s father’s Grandmother and she lived on a Fäbod during the summers. Dergården is located in Myrbacka, which is close to Noret where Sarah was born. Brent’s father’s grandfather lived in Järna (also called DalaJärna). All these places are close and located in Dalarna, Sweden. The entire Der Erik Jabobsson family emigrated to Jackson County, Wisconsin in 1883. (Brent has also contributed a story about his ancestor’s emigration available on this website [My Swedish Heritage](#).)

Brent’s pesentation included several videos of practices that are part of the Summer Farming tradition. The Cow Horn (Swedish Kohorn) was used to call the cows home for milking. (This is a link to a YouTube video and may include advertising.) https://youtu.be/7k2qs_cgUeo

THE SWEDISH KÖK

ASPARAGUS RISOTTO WITH MARJORAM

(from Tina Nordström's Cooking Show)

2 shallots, finely chopped
 1 bunch marjoram
 3 T olive oil
 1-2/3 c. Arborio rice
 ½ c. white wine
 1 quart vegetable stock
 1 bunch asparagus, cut in small pieces
 1 cup shredded Parmesan
 Salt and pepper

Saute shallots and marjoram in oil until onions are soft. Add rice and cook until rice becomes slightly transparent. Add wine and simmer until mostly absorbed by the rice. Add water a little at a time (the rice will absorb the liquid) and let it simmer for 15 minutes. Add the asparagus and simmer for another 5 minutes. Fold the Parmesan in and season with salt and pepper. Serve and enjoy!

SMÅLANDSK CHEESECAKE

6 tablespoons blanched almonds, chopped
 3 eggs
 ¼ cup sugar
 ¼ cup flour
 1 cup milk or cream
 16 ounces cottage cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease the pan. Combine eggs and sugar, blend with flour and milk. Blend in cottage cheese and almonds. If desired, add 1-2 drops of almond extract. Pour mixture into pan; bake for 45-50 minutes until it is golden in color. Serve with whipped cream and lingon.

CHEESECAKE IN THE KINGDOM OF GLASS

In the southern Swedish province of Småland is the famed "Kingdom of Glass." Many small glass factories have been in existence in Småland for over 200 years because of the availability of sand and fuel to burn. The geography that made it ideal for glassblowing also made it difficult for farmers. Many Swedes emigrated to America during hard times. Those who were able to stay became very resourceful.

Cheesecake is Småland's most popular dish along with lingon which was abundant in the woods. The combination of glassblowing and cheesecake came about because the glass factories have evenings when they offer *hyttsill* (foundry herring). The meal is served in the foundry and consists of herring, aquavit and cheesecake. This tradition started many years ago when tramps were allowed to sleep on the floors in the warm glass factories.

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