

the Timen Stiddem Society

NEWSLETTER



The family history newsletter for the descendants of the immigrant from Sweden in the seventeenth century to New Sweden (Wilmington), Delaware, encompassing the surnames: Stidham, Steadham, Stedham, Stidam and Steddom among many others.

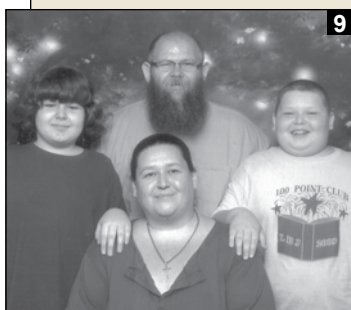
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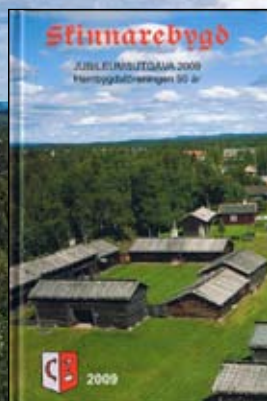
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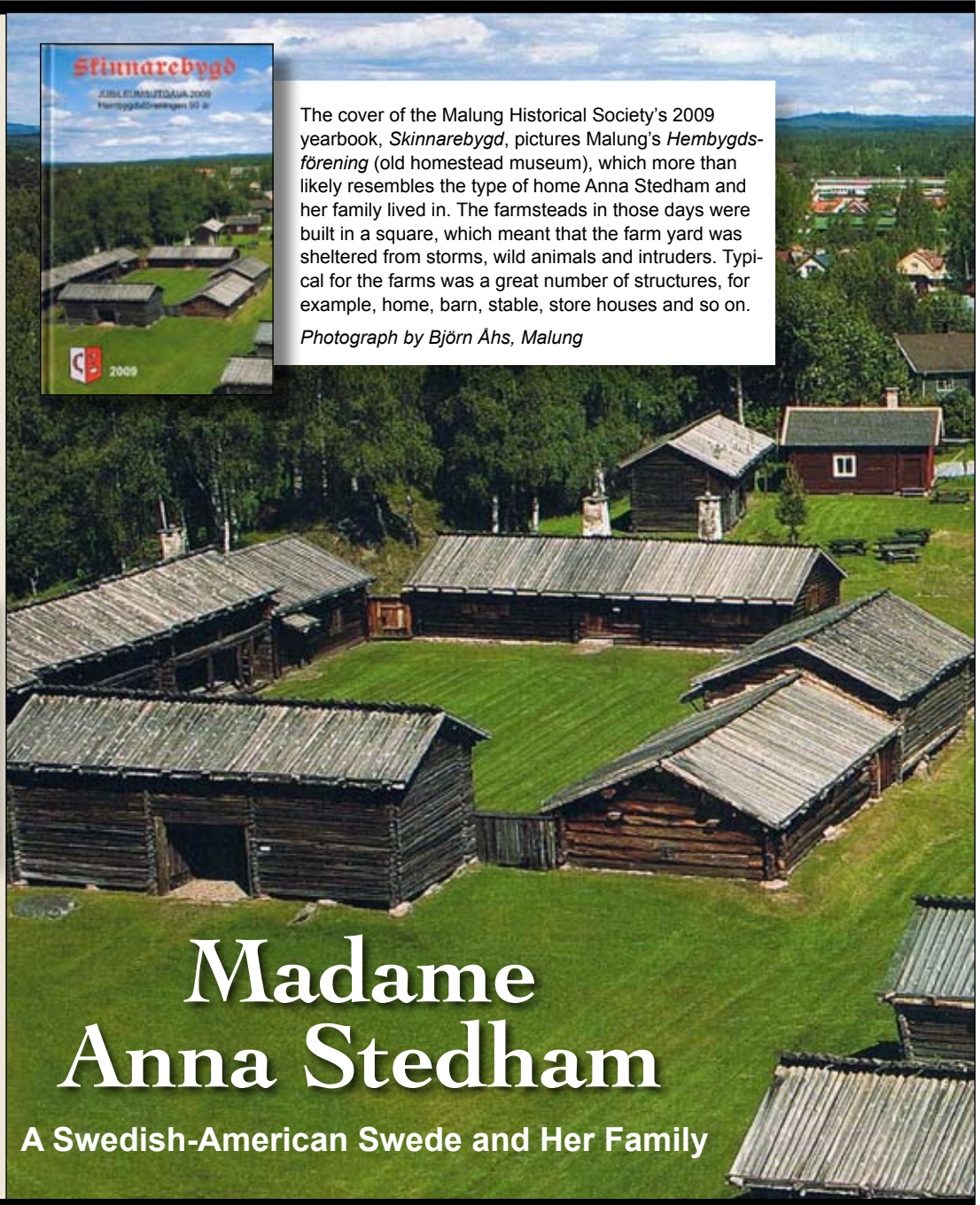
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The cover of the Malung Historical Society's 2009 yearbook, *Skinnarebygd*, pictures Malung's *Hembygds-förening* (old homestead museum), which more than likely resembles the type of home Anna Stedham and her family lived in. The farmsteads in those days were built in a square, which meant that the farm yard was sheltered from storms, wild animals and intruders. Typical for the farms was a great number of structures, for example, home, barn, stable, store houses and so on.

Photograph by Björn Åhs, Malung



Madame Anna Stedham

A Swedish-American Swede and Her Family

Madame Anna Stedham

A Swedish-American Swede And Her Family

By Margaretha Hedblom

Translated by Kim-Eric Williams

The old, remaining Church books of Malung Parish in Sweden's Dalarna province contain a wealth of information about the lives of everyday people who lived in this rural area. While it was the author's intent to study the causes of infant mortality at the end of the Eighteenth Century, an unusual death notice in those records caught her eye and changed the course of her research. The record stated simply: *At Hole. Madame Anna Stedham, born in America 1704. Married 1721 to Sheriff And[ers] Engman, 2 sons and 2 daughters. She lived as a true Christian. She came to Sweden with Dean [Erik] Björk in 1714. Anna Stedham died quickly from a stroke and old age. At an age of 75 she died on 8 February 1777 and was buried on 9 March.*

The question that immediately came to mind was: why was her burial postponed for almost a month? It was the custom at that time to anticipate the need for graves over the long, cold winter and dig one very large grave before the onset of cold weather. Then, as deaths occurred during the season, all cof-

ins would be interred in the one large grave already prepared. That year, twenty-eight burials were recorded in the churchyard, which could have exceeded the space available for winter interments. It also could have been because relatives and friends had such a long distance to travel to pay their respects to the Sheriff's wife.

Before connecting the various puzzle pieces of Anna Stedham's life, a bit of historical background is in order. By 1637 Dutch-speaking Walloon, Peter Minuit, had contacted the Swedish government about leading a Swedish expedition to North America to establish a Swedish trading post and colony. The ships *Fågel Grip* and *Kalmar Nyckel*

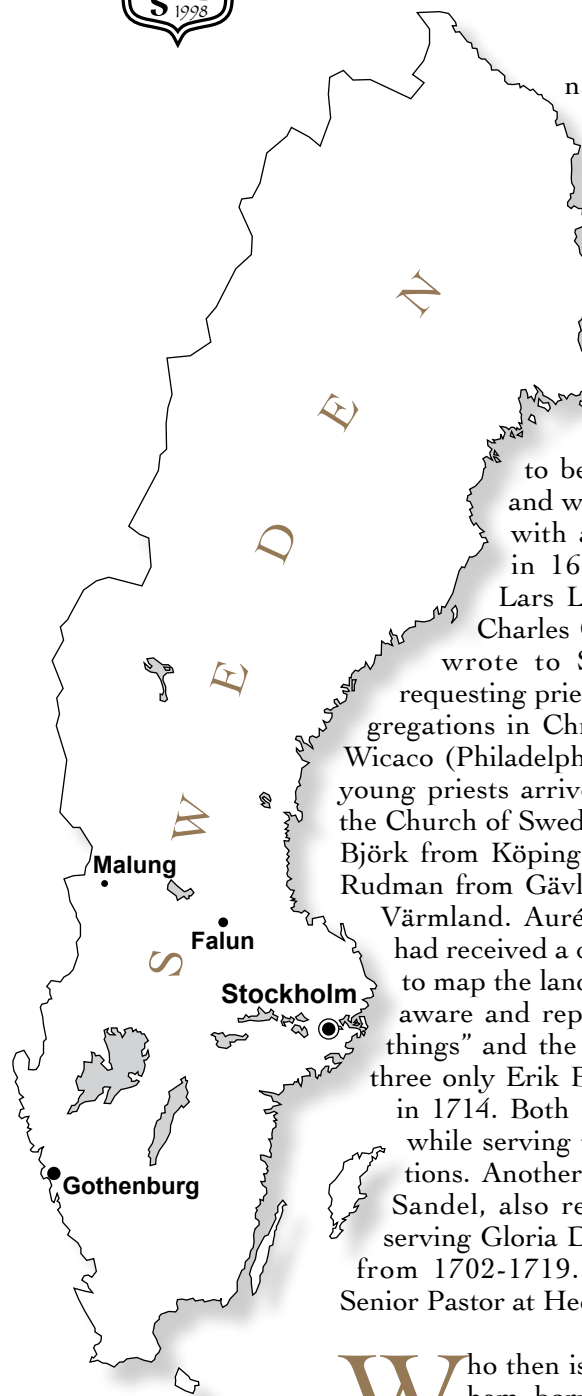
were equipped for the journey that ended at what is now Wilmington, Delaware in 1638. Among the first settlers were two youths from the city of Falun, some settlers who had committed crimes, a few slash-and-burn Finnish farmers from Värmland, Swedish tradesmen and traditional farmers. Their first task was to construct a fort, Fort Christina,

Ground-level view of Malung's old homestead museum, Hembygdsförening. Anna Stedham's adult life would have revolved around living in a farmstead built in this manner.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KERSTIN SANDGREN





named after their young Queen. It was Sweden's hope that the Colony's tobacco and fur trade would solve its economic problems and refill the government's coffers, depleted by its involvement in the Thirty Years War.

The New Sweden colony did not prove to be economically successful and was captured by the Dutch with a superior military force in 1655. It was after Pastor Lars Lock's death in 1688 that Charles Christophersson Springer wrote to Swedish King Carl XI requesting priests to serve their two congregations in Christina (Wilmington) and Wicaco (Philadelphia). Finally in 1697 three young priests arrived to renew the work of the Church of Sweden on the Delaware: Erik Björk from Köping in Västmanland, Anders Rudman from Gävle and Jonas Aurén from Värmland. Aurén was a geographer and had received a commission from the King to map the land at the mouth of the Delaware and report back, noting "unique things" and the peoples' customs. Of the three only Erik Björk returned to Sweden in 1714. Both Rudman and Aurén died while serving their American congregations. Another Swedish priest, Andreas Sandel, also returned to Sweden after serving Gloria Dei Church (Philadelphia) from 1702-1719. In Sweden he became Senior Pastor at Hedemora.

Who then is this woman, Anna Stedham, born in America at the beginning of the 1700s and ended her life in the remote community of Malung? Her grandfather was the field surgeon, Timen Stiddem, who was a barber-surgeon aboard the first voyage of the *Kalmar Nyckel* in 1638. He stayed with the ship and returned to New Sweden on its second voyage in 1640. He remained until 1644 when he returned to Sweden, married and subsequently had three children. In 1649 Stiddem was bringing his family to New Sweden when their ship *Kattan* (The Cat) was shipwrecked in Puerto Rico and his wife and three children per-

ished as prisoners of the Spanish. Stiddem escaped, made his way back to Sweden by 1651, where he married for the second time. In 1654 he and his wife sailed to New Sweden aboard the three-mast warship, *Örnen*, (The Eagle). The ship, under the command of Johan Risingh, was making its tenth expedition to New Sweden. As the only Swedish doctor, he often had to undertake long canoe journeys to help his countrymen and their families. (Stiddem and his second wife [name unknown] had nine children, who eventually changed the spelling of their name to Stedham. By the sixth generation, most of Stiddem's male heirs had adopted "Stidham" as the preferred spelling, but the name has many variations: Stidham, Stidam, Stidom, Stedham, Steadham and Steddom.)

Anna Stedham was the daughter of Lulof Stiddem, the eldest son of Timen Stiddem. Her parents died when she was very young, and she became a foster child of the local Swedish Lutheran pastor, Dean Erik Björk and his wife, Christina Stålkofa (Stalcup). The priest's family already had six children, one of whom died before their return to Sweden in 1714. (Petter Björk is buried in the altar area of Holy Trinity [Old Swedes] Church, Wilmington, Delaware).

The long sea journey across the Atlantic over stormy waters often meant difficult hardships, but the Björk family, with the young Anna Stedham, was lucky. Their trip to England took only about two months. However, the continuation over the North Sea was more difficult and they had to put in at Marstrand, to the north of Gothenburg. Everyone in the group had survived the days at sea, but Erik Björk was sick and had to remain in Gothenburg for a month. Upon regaining his health he continued the trip up to Skara for his appointment with Bishop Svedberg. He then continued up to his new parish in Falun.

The Björks and Anna finally came to the humble rectory at Övre Åsen in the copper mining city of Falun in Advent of 1714. It was here that the young Anna Stedham got to know Anders Engman, who became her husband. The exact date of their marriage is unknown, though two dates are noted, 1718 and 1721. The 1721 date is believed to be the correct date, since Anna provided the information that 1704 was her birth year. The Church books do not reveal when her hus-

band was born.

In the year 1723, their first child, Christina, was born. Her Baptism sponsors were Dean Björk and his son, the student Tobias Björk, who was later ordained. According to the Catechetical Examination Register for the Stora Kopparberg Parish, Christina moved to Vika Parish with her husband, Lars Silje-holm, who, like her grandfather Anders Engman, was a Sheriff.

In the year 1751 Lars and Christina lived in Leksand, on the shores of Lake Siljan. It was there that their first child, a daughter, was born in "the night between 11 and 12 before the 28th of February" according to the Birth and Baptismal Register. The girl was named, Maria Christina and was their "beloved daughter." She had many sponsors with fine titles at her Baptism on 4 March. Normally in Leksand Parish a child had four sponsors, two of each sex. This little child had eight official witnesses, among them was The Rev. Dean Johan Nordman and his wife Magdalena Sandel, who like the child's grandmother was born in New Sweden in America. At that time Lars occupation was listed as accountant.

After Christina's birth, Anna and Anders had two sons; Olaus who was born in 1725, followed in 1726 Anders Jr. Listed as a Baptismal sponsor was Miss Catharina Björk, Anna's foster sister, and the only one of Dean Björk's daughters who remained unmarried.

The fourth child, a daughter, of Anna Stedham and Anders Engman was not easy to locate. She possibly could be the Miss Magdalena Engman whose birth year is given as 1723. In any case the year is wrong since that is the same year that Christina was born and she was not a twin. Magdalena (Malena) married master tailor Anders Svedberg at Lundtåkten in the Kristine Congregation of Falun. She had seven children during their thirteen years of marriage. After Svedberg's death she remarried to a master tailor, Jonas Sundberg from Hälsingland, with whom she had one child. The title, "Miss" (Jungfru) seems to indicate that she was the daughter of Anders Engman. There is no other person of rank with the surname Engman in Falun at that time. The daughter of a person of rank was called "Miss" as opposed to a farmer's daughter who was a "Maid" (piga) On the other hand a married woman of higher rank was called, Madame and the farmer's wife,



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Hustru. Another characteristic of naming in the 1700's is that married women retained their given surname, whether it is a civil name or a patronymic, such as the father's name, Ersdotter or Halvarsdotter. Thus Anna Stedham always kept her name and never had the surname Engman.

It could be that the fourth child is Maria, who in 1751 was described as "modest and honest" when she married mine worker Johan Benjaminsson Fahlstedt from Elsborg in Falun's Stora Kopparberg Parish. Maria is said to have served many functions in the congregation, the last with Mister Com-minister (Assistant Pastor) Lindström. Her employer, Pastor Lindström, performed the marriage. She does not seem to be identical with the Magdalena mentioned above. Could she have been born during the time her parents, Lars and Christina were in Stockholm? A notice to this effect is found in the USA but it has not been verified. Whether they lived in Stockholm or in which parish is unknown. If they did live there it must have been between the birth of Anders, Jr. in 1726 and two years later when they are registered in Malung.

In 1728, about seven years after their marriage, Anders Engman became Sheriff in Malung, with duties to watch over the general law and order, to prosecute criminals and other duties. The family can be followed in the Census Register. Persons of "rank," to which the family belonged, are listed last and without any exact address. But in the death notice for Anna it says, "Hole."

Located in the center of town, *Lisselska huset* (the Lissel's house) is known today as the most recognized building in Malung.

About the Author



Margaretha Hedblom is the former Director of Culture in Malung, Sweden. She holds a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Uppsala, where History was one of her main subjects of study, along with the History of Art, ethnology and Literature.

She has done historical research on emigration, specializing in emigration from the province of Dalarna, Sweden to America's midwest.

Ms. Hedblom's research has led her many times to the States over the years, interviewing Swedish immigrants and their descendants in preparation for writing the book, *Hälsa dem därhemma* (Greet the old folks back home).

A freelance newspaper and radio journalist, Ms. Hedblom has written articles, given lectures and produced a film for television, all based on her expertise in Swedish emigration. She has also worked as a tour director in Europe and America, and has visited New Sweden on several occasions.

By coincidence, she found the name of Anna Stedham in her research and immediately took an interest in her life. The result is her article for *Dalarnas Hembygdsförbunds årsbok 2009* and it's translated version on these pages.

Further research in the Parish registers lists Anna as a widow who probably lived in "Holarna," who sometimes in the Church books is called, "Myckelby-Hole." Persons of rank usually lived in the villages nearest the church. The next generation of Engmans is listed as living in Lindsberg.

Anders Engman died in 1748. His household inventory was written in January 1749 and is the oldest preserved from Malung parish in the National Archives in Uppsala. Normally one reads about where the deceased was born and their descendants, but these details are missing and only contains a list of his possessions. He owned a farm in Backbyn, which had among other things, a cottage [stuga] with rooms, a wooden storehouse, a horse stall, a barn, and a little spring. There were woodsheds, "the houses at Arf's chalet"

and a boathouse for a large new boat and a little old one. The combined worth of the house was 216 daler and 16 öre copper coins.

Anders Engman's clothes were valued at 48 daler and 16 öre copper coins.

It was clothing of homespun, broadcloth and leather: trousers, coats, vests, and underwear. The clothing was valued comparatively high – almost a quarter of the the value of the houses. Every item of clothing was noted as new, old, good or poor quality.

The house was well provided with books. Besides the Bible, Collections of Sermons [postillor], "household books" and many others were "German Books," whatever that might mean. The library was valued at 40 daler copper coins, i.e. almost as much as Anders Engman's clothing.

There were silver cups and spoons; pewter dishes, bowls, bottles and candlesticks together with items made of copper and brass. There were bedclothes, leather cushions, a feather bed, and animal skins. And there was a yellow cloth like a tablecloth and cloths of coarsely woven yarn [blånor].

Among the wooden things was a painted closet with four doors, valued at 6 daler, a repainted closet with two doors for half of that sum, and a corner closet, chests, looms, a mangle, etc.

Household goods of different types were of course found – scissors, pokers, bottles, trays, bowls, and 4 glasses, small and large (a quite strong indication that this was a rich family, since glass was unusual in farming families before the 1800's). They owned two bearskins and a one-half wolf skin, a sleigh with attachments, two-bottomed cans (cans with an extra bottom where the froth of the beer could run back into the can), a grind stone, butter tub, churns, and naturally a quite large collection of cattle worth 479 daler and 8 öre copper coins. Some of the animals are specifically described: 1 red tawny horse, 1 dry cow, 1 red spotted calf, 1 castrated young ox, and 2 sows.

A careful study of the household inventory of Anders Engman, of which the author has only given a few examples, can illustrate a lot about a large farm in Malung during the first half of the 1700's. It was determined where the family had its fields and forests and for those who know the area it would perhaps be interesting to know that in addition to the property in Backbyn, they had property

in Tällbyn, Västra Utsjö, Holarne, Myckelbyn, at Albacken and Moholmen and also at Bullsjön.

The estate paid 2 daler and 11 öre copper coins to the church's Poor Relief Fund, the receipt from which was signed by Pastor Johan Elfvius. The whole balance of the estate, excluding debts and "certain and uncertain claims" amounted to 1696 daler and 23 öre copper coins. This indicates a standard far above the average in the Malung of that time. The author has not been able to find anything that comes from America. Did Anna Stedham bring along a fortune from America? Perhaps Anders Engman himself was a well-to-do son of a rich man who could acquire property in Malung. It would be interesting to see the household inventory that was written after Anna Stedham's death but that has not yet been discovered. Perhaps it is still in some farmstead in Malung.

When Comminister Elfvius became Senior Pastor in Vika Parish, Malung he was

described in these words: "He had trouble feeding himself and his large household in this poor place that was suffering from crop failure, yet he was active in many respects." Anders Engman and his family are thought to have had more than what the necessities of life demanded. The content of the estate was witnessed by Per Andersson of Nordanåker and Eric Larsson of Fors, who both made their mark on the document. The latter with the addition of the farmstead name, "Perjos" became the father-in-law to Anders Engman's son, Anders, Jr.

Anders Jr. married Ingeborg Ersdotter from Västra Fors. According to the Burial register she was born in 1736 and died as a widow in 1783. She was blessed with twelve children, three sons and nine daughters. When a peasant daughter married a person of rank she automatically became "Madame." Ingeborg climbed the social ladder in the Malung of that time.

Of Anders Jr. and Ingeborg's children,



The wooden sculpture of Christ in Malung Church is also of medieval origin and would have been a familiar site to Anna and her family.

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Malung Church originated in medieval times and is believed to date from the 12th century. It has been rebuilt and altered over the years. Anna Stedham and her family would have attended this church and are probably buried somewhere in the cemetery. No headstone for her exists to this day.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARGARETHA HEDBLOM





Churchwarden, Gun Byttner, displays the black chasuble made in 1759, the oldest preserved in Malung Church.

The Medieval-era baptismal font pictured below was sold many years ago, but donated back to the church around 1930.



the author has succeeded in tracing three daughters: Anna Christina, Lisa, and Sara. Anna Christina was born in 1760 in Malung and moved to Falun, where she is listed as an unmarried woman [Jungfru]. Lisa was born in 1767 in Lindsberg and died in 1849 in Grönland, Dalarna. She was widowed after the death of her husband Fisk Olof Ersson of Grönland, whom she had married at the age of twenty-four. At the Great Land Redistribution in the middle of the 1800's one place was named "Lisagård" and another "Fiskgård" near the northern area of Grönland which was later named "Lisatorget" (Lisa Square). Lisa Andersdotter, Engman's first name, was unusual in the village and was the source of a new farmstead name. An old "Lisastuga" (Lisa cottage) seems to have still existed when Olof Lisell, at the end of the 1800s, gave the name "Lisatorget" to the open place near the present central flower shop.

The third daughter, Sara married in 1797 to Lycke Jonas Jonsson in Storbyn. She died in 1836. The Burial register explains that she was "a widow

from Storbyn, born the 15 October 1776, the daughter of Sheriff Anders Engman and Ingeborg Ersdotter from Holarne." Permission to marry was given to them by his parents and her guardians since both her parents had died.

Six daughters and three sons remain to be identified. They may have died young and been noted in missing Church registers. They also could have married in other parishes and might, by chance, be found in Church books there.

Anna Stedham lived the greater part of her adult life in Malung. One wonders what her life was like between 1714 and 1777 in a land that was considerably different from the New Sweden of her birth. Was she considered odd, having come from the land of the Lenape Indians and seeing the Swedish families settling along the Delaware Valley. She had witnessed Dean Björk's activities in building Holy Trinity Church and experienced the long sea journey to Sweden. The long cart journey over rough dirt roads up to Falun, then one of the most important cities in Sweden, had to create lifelong memories. She finally settled in an area considerably more barren than the deciduously forested riverbanks of her birthplace. Corn (maize), squash, wheat, tobacco, melons and

grapes belonged to her everyday existence. In Malung lingonberry and blueberry picking were her household tasks. Anna Stedham experienced the terrible famine years, 1772-73 when people were forced to beg, bake bread from birch bark, and use moss and lichen as replacements for grain. Not even in upper class families were spared from the effects of the troubles with outbreaks of gangrene and dysentery. One wonders if she ever told about the experiences of her native land to her children and neighbors?

Because there were so many children born in the Anders, Jr. family, it is probable that quite a few residents of Malung today are unaware they are descendants of Anna Stedham and have roots in what was the New Sweden colony in North America. Anna and Anders' first-born daughter, Christina, had children in Falun and most likely has descendants there also. The fate of the other two children is unknown.

It would be interesting for these descendants to know that two societies in the United States are devoted to research about New Sweden and its early inhabitants. Philadelphia's Swedish Colonial Society (www.colonialswedes.org) has supported family research and publications for more than one hundred years. The Timen Stiddem Society, organized in 1998 by three Stiddem descendants, keeps track of all the vast number of people who descend from the original doctor on the Delaware. (<http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tstiddem/index.htm>) Both societies welcome members and can be easily accessed on the Internet. It is a long way from Delaware to Dalarna, both geographically and chronologically, yet there are cousins in both areas. Almost 300 years have passed since little Anna Stedham saw the light of day. Perhaps there are "memories" left with her descendants in Malung. Are there letters from her family in Delaware? Even if the ability to write was not so widespread among people in the 1700s, one could expect that "finer" people had the opportunity to learn to write. Her life deserves to be lifted up and the author recommends eventual relatives to search in family archives and chests for her and their own histories. Perhaps the key to so many questions will be found in some farmstead called Fiskgård or Lyckegård in Malung.

Meet Our Malung Cousins!



The fine Swedes pictured on this page all descend from Anna [16] Stedham, or are married to those who do.

Photo above: Standing left to right are John-Erik Gustafsson, Anders Lycke with Arvid Lycke in his arms, Stig Gustavsson, Per-Arne Gunnarsson, Gert-Olov Lycke and Hans Sandgren. Sitting left to right are Kerstin Lycke Sandgren, Birgitta Gunnarsson, Lilian Gustavsson and Mait Jonasson. FYI: John-Erik, Anders, Stig, Gert-Olov, Birgitta and Kerstin are Anna Stedham descendants; Anders and Kerstin are siblings, as are Birgitta and Stig.

Photo at right: From the left are Hans Sandgren and wife Kerstin Lycke Sandgren, their daughter Johanna and son Mathias.

