



~God Jul och Gott Nytt År~

With Thanksgiving now in our rearview mirror, the Board hopes that you had a happy and safe day. It is also our wish for Christmas and the New Year that you continue to stay safe and that 2021 will permit us to continue with the meetings and events that you look forward to enjoying. Lucia and Julotta won't be live events, but we will be providing alternates through the magic of the internet that we hope you will enjoy. And you won't have to go out in the cold! Please keep reading to find that information.

LUCIA CELEBRATION—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13—7:00 PM



Welcome Opening Remarks Program



- *Last year Lucia Celebration, introduction + Video*
- *Lucia in Sweden*
- *Lucia and Lucia Bun story*
- *Lucia Concert*
- *Closing Remarks*

You will receive a separate email with your invitation to join the meeting via Zoom. Please watch for it and let Jan know if you have any questions. If we don't have an email address for you, you will receive a separate letter.

JULOTTA—Although we will not have an in-person Julotta service this year, you can read about one that was held in Stockholm several years ago. You will find it on Page 3.

JANUARY MEETING—Plans are underway for the January meeting. Details will follow.

FEEDBACK ON ZOOM—Because we will have to depend on Zoom for meetings a little longer, we would like to do whatever we can to make it better. Your help is needed for this, so would you please tell what you think about it—whether you like it or whether you have had problems. Just let Jan know at 262-695-8630 or jehregren@outlook.com. Comments and suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held online via Zoom, thanks to the leadership of John Elliott. Although there was a quorum for the meeting, we hope to increase virtual attendance for any further Zoom meetings and will help with any problems that members may have. (Please note the request for feedback on page 1)

The agenda for the meeting, which was led by President Barbara Froemming, consisted of:

- Annual Reports
- Election of Directors
- Updates of Activities
- The Wisconsin Historical Marker project
- Music by Mary Stetson and Carol Gustafson

The slate of nominees for the two directorships with three-year terms was presented by the nominating committee and consisted of George Lofgren and Joann Kreimendahl. As there were no further nominations, the slate was approved by acclamation.

After a review of the year's activities by President Froemming, the meeting was adjourned and the program began.

The program on the Wisconsin Historical Marker project was presented by John Elliott. The project was initiated by Jan Ehrengren to recognize Gustaf Unonius and the New Upsala Swedish settlement with an official State of Wisconsin Historical Marker. See link to the presentation: **Wisconsin Historical Marker project pdf**

The meeting concluded with music by Carol Gustafson and Mary Stetson. Our thanks go to these members for bringing their talents to our meetings.

STATE OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL MARKER--GUSTAF UNONIUS AND NEW UPSALA

At the Annual General Meeting, SAHSWI announced a project to establish a State of Wisconsin Historical Marker to commemorate **Gustaf Unonius and The New Upsala first Swedish settlement** in Wisconsin.



An introductory presentation was shown and members were asked to let us know if they are interested in participating in the project.

Gustaf Unonius arrived in Wisconsin in 1841 and established the first Swedish settlement in Wisconsin in Chenequa by Pine Lake. He named the settlement New Upsala after the city in Sweden he had left, Upsala (current spelling Uppsala). Unonius' life and travels from Sweden to USA was summarized by SAHSWI board member John Elliott in a society meeting in 2018.

Link to his presentation: [The first Swedish Settlement in Wisconsin.](#)

Volunteers—thanks to Tracy Redman and Martha Bergland for their willingness to help. But more volunteers are needed. Let Jan know if you are interested.

A JULOTTA SERVICE IN SWEDEN

Instead of having our own Julotta, here is an invitation you might have received if you were in Stockholm in 2007: *Julotta 25 december 07:00 Riddarholmskyrkan. Enda chansen på hela året att vara med om en gudstjänst i Riddarholmskyrkan! [Translated: "Julotta" 25. December at 7:00AM, Riddarholms Church. The only chance all year to participate in a service in the Riddarholm Church.] (cont.)*

This was originally printed in a newsletter several years. Not only does it follow the Christmas tradition of re-reading a good story, but it seems relevant in several ways. First is our current focus on Gustaf Unonius, but second, it serves as a reminder that other Swedish Americans also lived through difficult times and persevered.

BITS AND PIECES OF SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORY

Wisconsin's Swedish Pioneers Observe the Holidays

By Harry Anderson

From a few surviving written records some insights are possible today on how the often financially strapped Swedish immigrants to Wisconsin celebrated the Christmas and New Year's holidays that had been so significant in their lives before they left the mother country. One of the richest sources of this information is the writings of Gustaf Unonius, leader of the Pine Lake settlement in today's Waukesha County, where he and his immediate following settled in 1841. In particular the Unonius memoirs of his pioneer years in Wisconsin described the manner in which central themes of Swedish holiday observances were continued in the New World—the importance of the family circle; gift giving; the dependence upon extensive use of candle lighting; serving of special foods; and the reading of the Biblical Christmas story in the home. These practices were all part of the Pine Lake observances in December, 1841. That year Christine Sodergren, the family maid, prepared a splendid rice pudding (“risgrynsgröt”) for the holiday morning meal; extra candles were obtained to brighten the otherwise gloomy interior of their log cabin residence; and for Julotta, Charlotte Unonius received a gift of a homemade oak dining table, her husband observing that this very welcome present no longer made it necessary to serve the traditional rice pudding meal on a trunk lid. After their family devotional service, the household traveled to nearby Delafield town, where they were surprised to see sawmills in full operation in spite of the religious holy day. They not only missed hearing the singing of familiar hymns (including of course “Var Hälsad Sköne Morgonstund” (All Hail to Thee O Blessed Morn) but also found that a number of Protestant churches did not hold worship services at all and only the Roman Catholic Congregations did so.

Several years later, after children became part of the Unonius household, more candles were added to brighten the cabin's interior; bread served with Christmas meals was whiter in color than usual; ginger cookies (undoubtedly the beloved “pepparkakor) were served for dessert; and economical but imaginative gifts of raisins and candy were distributed to all present.

At another pioneer Swedish colony near Lake Koshkonong in Jefferson County (the nucleus of this settlement had arrived from Sweden in 1843), one prominent member kept a diary which described other traditional practices of Swedish observances brought to frontier Wisconsin. On December 25, 1845 Thure Kumlien wrote in his diary : “I hauled the womenfolk to [Carl] Reuterskold's; then to [Gustaf] Melberg's [and at each] I read Hagberg's Christmas dissertation.” [Hagberg's writing was from a widely known Swedish Book of Christmas sermons.] Two years later Kumlein's entry for January 6, 1848 described how visits to friends' homes still played a traditional role in the New Year's observances. “I called on all Swedes [in the neighborhood] and greeted them all and helped them celebrate New Year's Day.” A year later, 1849, Kumlein described a different dimension to the day's activity, writing that he had invited to his home “All my countrymen here” for a celebration.

And, if the Wisconsin pioneer Swedes looked forward to special foods and the enjoyment of a unique menu for Christmas dinner they sometimes utilized unusual methods to provide the meat dish for their celebration. The household of the celebrated Friman family, the first Swedes known to have settled in Wisconsin near Genoa City in Walworth County, offer one example of this. In August, 1841 one of the Friman sons wrote home to relatives in Sweden that during a wind storm, a fallen tree trunk had badly injured the back of one of their oxen. The animal survived but was unable to perform farm work. The letter writer added they they planned to nurse it along “but we intend to butcher him for Christmas.”

Christmas gifts apparently came in many forms, especially for imaginative Swedes, in that time period!