

Swedes on the Move: Politics, Culture, and Work among Swedish
Immigrants in British Columbia, 1900 – 1950

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ABSTRACT

“Swedes on the Move” examines specific aspects of the experience of Swedish migrants: the importance of gender and family; the influence of homeland culture and politics; and the influence of social mobility, or the expectation of it, on the Swedish-Canadian community in British Columbia. The study is structured in four parts each of which takes a micro, median, and macro approach to migration issues and compares influences of the home and the host countries. First, through a “twin” study it compares emigrants and their non-emigrating peers in Långasjö, a small parish in south-eastern Sweden. It argues that emigration affected gendered and social structures in Långasjö by encouraging some outward movement and halting other when new opportunities arose for those who stayed behind. Remigration also affected social structures when returning migrants from marginalized groups were able to purchase farms. Second, it looks at how myths developed around loggers as political radicals, the stereotypical occupation of Swedish males in British Columbia and shows that most Swedish immigrants worked outside the forest sector and only a few loggers were political activists. Third, it considers how the migration process influenced politically engaged Swedes, and through a case study of three politically active men argues that immigrants made their political choices based on their need to protect their class position in British Columbia. Finally, “Swedes on the Move” studies Swedish immigrant women whose personal, social and occupational roles were closely connected. Women played a stronger role in politics and in the labour movement in Sweden than in B.C. but in both places women struggled under a firmly entrenched patriarchal system.

The thesis concludes that their cultural and social background was influential but the immigration process and conditions in British Columbia were more important in determining immigrants’ roles, occupations, and political adherence in the new land whether they were workers or employers. Ideas about ‘cultural baggage,’ therefore, must make room for interactions and reciprocal effects.

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Dedication

To Liz and Dave, the true constants of my life. I will need you for always and love you forever.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study seeks to understand how the Swedish homeland in conjunction with their new environment influenced immigrants' life in Western Canada by examining several interconnected economic, social, familial, and political aspects of the immigration experience of Swedes in British Columbia in the first half of the twentieth century. In order to understand what shaped their lives it is not sufficient to study work alone, or try to explain political behaviour simply by pointing to the dominant political group of the sending nation. Instead, we need to study the complexity of lives that depended on past and present experiences. "Swedes on the Move" does not fragment immigrants' lives into disjointed studies, but includes the importance of family in the ethnic community, the role of homeland philosophies, cultures and politics, and looks at how upward social mobility affected the Swedish-Canadian community over time. It

also probes how social and familial roles influenced immigrants' behaviour by looking at ideas and ideals of sexuality in this mostly masculine society, and how the community was affected by the role of Swedish women as wage earners, sexual partners, and members of different Swedish-Canadian societies. Yet, the complexities of migration make it difficult to predict occupational and political responses by immigrant workers in the receiving country. While some individuals imported strong political beliefs, most others were guided by political and occupational conditions. Indeed, conditions in the receiving country were more important in determining immigrants' occupations and political adherence than were experiences from the home country.

This thesis is not about all aspects of the immigrant experience, because the historian of immigration must put that experience within specific frames that are often limited by the surviving evidence. Focusing on aspects of work, politics and culture does not mean fragmenting immigrant experience into narrow compartments; culture, after all, is a very wide frame of reference. The economic, social, familial and political experiences were all interconnected elements of culture. As we shall see, sexuality was also connected to work and culture. By focusing within specific frames, this thesis is consistent with recent literature on migration in attempting to be multifaceted, and attentive to the complex and varied conditions of work, politics and culture in a specific migratory group.

In any migratory population two interacting conditions are predominant: the influence of background in the sending country, and the experiences that migrants encountered in the receiving country. This thesis is about the relationship and interaction between these two predominant conditions. It argues that conditions in the receiving country (in this case, British Columbia) were more important than formative conditions in the home country, especially in determining patterns of work and political adherence. Nonetheless, the immigrant experience

was not bipolar, the result of two separate and discrete influences. Rather it was a mix of reciprocal influences. An initial migration spawned further movement out of the home country; at the same time it could also halt further emigration by creating new opportunities for those who stayed behind. Many emigrants also became re-migrants, returning from the new country, carrying baggage that reflected not simply the influence of the new country, but rather the influence of migrant experience in the new country. This thesis argues that our ideas about "cultural baggage" must make room for the importance of interactions and reciprocal effects.

Gender also affected decisions on whether to stay or return to the homeland. Women were less likely to emigrate and less likely to return home after a few years away. Systematically low paid, women found it difficult to raise the necessary funds for emigration, and women in farming families might have found it more profitable to remain behind when the emigration of older brothers broadened their chances of assuming the family farm. For women who emigrated to British Columbia, the late frontier structure raised their marital chances and created openings for employment and self-employment, but did not significantly change their social and occupational lives. In British Columbia, as in Sweden, women were constricted by low paid service-related occupations, whether working for themselves and for others; in Swedish churches and social organisations women operated in important but auxiliary positions to men. Politically, the limited number of Swedish women in B.C. made it difficult for working-class women to operate on the same level as was possible in political parties and in the labour movement in Sweden. This does not mean that immigration to British Columbia was a negative experience for women. Interviews and memoirs rarely if ever suggest any bitterness or regret in the choices to leave Sweden for Canada.¹ For women as for men, the decision to emigrate was not simple or

¹ For example, see Eva St. Jean, "Swedish Immigrant Women: 'Never, Never Sorry — Always Glad,' British Columbia Historical News 30.1 (Winter 1996-97): 30-33.

straightforward, but depended on a myriad of economic and family circumstances. Likewise, the decision to stay was not simply tied to economics but rested as much, if not more, on the individuals' chances of starting a family in the new country.

To understand what drove people to leave their kin and place of birth one must both study general social and economic factors in the home countries, and recognize local variations in industries and political history. Thus, one must resist making sweeping statements regarding immigrants' probable employment and political loyalties in Canada based on general assumptions of Sweden. General economic and political national patterns do not explain how an individual, such as Rolf Bruhn, raised in an urban environment and whose familiarity with trees barely stretched beyond a stroll in Gothenburg's city parks, became a "lumber baron" and a Conservative MLA in British Columbia. Nor does it shed light on why Olof Hanson, a crofter's son from North-Eastern Sweden would become a large private employer and long-term successful Liberal Member of Parliament. By understanding the interplay between homeland influences and the migration process we can begin to appreciate more fully the subtleties of migration, and how attitudes and conditions in the receiving country affected immigrants' occupational and political ideas.

Historians have long grappled with understanding the forces of migrations. Historic theories of immigration in North America have swung from depicting immigrants as hapless victims to depicting them as nation builders; Swedish immigrants in British Columbia are not easily recognizable in either model. Oscar Handlin's classic and highly male-centered work on American immigration argues that first generation immigrants lived in a crisis, unable to draw on their national culture and establish a secure life in America.² This dark image is largely absent

² Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People, (1951) Second ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

from Swedes in western Canada, who generally had a positive, forward seeking outlook, and who, if returning, more often did so victoriously than as broken failures. Handlin's thesis has been critiqued, perhaps most notably by John Bodnar, whose answer to Handlin is more in line with Swedish-Canadian immigration experiences. Bodnar claims that immigrants in America used both past and present experiences, but that their goals focused on what was immediately attainable.³ Others, such as Dirk Hoerder looks at Canadian immigration from both a time and a geographical perspective, starting in the Maritimes in the eighteenth century, and moving West in time and space as Canada expanded and its immigrants became more ethnically diverse. He suggests that Canadian historians have placed too much emphasis on the so-called founding nations – French and Anglo Canadians – when discussing nation building in Canada. Hoerder argues that the Canadian state on a lower local level was more important both for the people and for the creation of a functional nation. This level, in particular the postal service and public schools, were created and supported by all immigrants.⁴ Certainly Swedish immigrants cared little about ethnic differences between French and Anglo Canadians, and as Hoerder suggests, were more concerned with the day-to-day functioning of their society.

Canadian works that touch on the land of origin among immigrants mostly concentrate on the Canadian experience, and rarely question the different and sometimes opposing effects of emigration on the society left behind.⁵ In their studies on Finnish and Italian women respectively, Varpu Lindström-Best and Franca Iacovetta argue that these women were shaped by their homeland cultures as much as by class and gender.⁶ Although both focus on Canada,

³ John Bodnar, *The Transplanted. A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1985).

⁴ Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant lives in Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

⁵ Some examples of historical studies on immigration that are wholly concerned with the Canadian situation are, Donald Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History*, Montreal, 1984; and Donald Avery, "Dangerous Foreigners": *European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto, 1979).

⁶ In a different Canadian study, Ruth Frager looks more deeply into the interplay of all members of the community, thus taking into account several complex issues. If Frager's *Sweatshop Strife* focus more on ethnic behaviour than

they consider the origin country when looking at women's role in the family, the work place, religious institutions, and in socialist organizations. Varpu Lindström-Best suggests Finnish immigrant women reacted differently to work, religion, and sexual relationships than did other immigrant women in Canada, and that survival strategies emerged from a blend of Finnish and Canadian circumstances. They were inspired by defiance against the old country and the Lutheran religion, and by a sense of alienation from the Canadian legal and political system.⁷

The Finnish socialist tradition is an important part of her argument. In Canada, the inclination towards socialism through active membership in the Finnish Socialist Party in Ontario was pronounced since the majority of Finnish immigrants were labourers, thus lacking an elite working class or a middle class to act as a conservative influence.

Whatever their political strengths, immigrant women were unable to bridge gender gaps within their own ethnic group. As with Swedish women, there are contradictions between the ideal Finnish woman as physically strong and independent and the reluctance of Finnish men to give them anything but a subordinate position in the community. This seems to contrast their experiences from Finland where women had a strong place in politics. Finnish immigrants often did not turn to socialism until after immigrating to Canada. It is possible that the combination of dangerous working conditions in Canada and their socialist tradition from Finland made socialism a logical choice; however, it is also likely that the strong cultural position of Finnish socialistic organizations in Canada caused some members to be as attracted to the social as much as the political aspect where the socialist clubs acted as a meeting place.

on immigration, it also resonates with "Swedes on the Move" by going the extra step and combining an analysis of gender, class, politics, and ethnicity. Ruth Frager, Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement in Toronto, 1900-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

⁷ Varpu Lindström-Best, Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988).

Franca Iacovetta suggests that past experiences and a culture based on family and kinship ties guided immigrants' occupational choices in Canada. Although used to agricultural work, many Italians avoided farm labour in Canada since it isolated them from their kin. The men were more drawn to outside work, especially construction, which offered more autonomy than factory work, and they were used to seasonal work through agriculture, so the seasonal aspect of construction work was acceptable. As for political responses, despite Canadian officials' fear of communism in post-war Italy, Italians in Canada differed from Finnish immigrants by resisting union organizations and by being willing to strike break. According to Iacovetta, however, radical Italians in Canada were guided by local labour conditions, and not by cultural baggage.⁸

“Swedes on the Move” combines methods of the previous ethnic studies, and considers a different component in immigration – that of the many who purchased a return ticket to the homeland. Remigration has been widely discussed in European historiography, but has found less resonance among North American scholars. Mark Wyman believes that American scholars have ignored remigrants and their motivations simply because American scholars responded to immigrants who rejected America, by in turn rejecting the remigrants.⁹ Remigrants thus were cast in the role of losers, the weak who were unable to sprout roots in the land of plenty, some having returned with savings, but most others broken financially, spiritually and physically. Wyman claims that from an American viewpoint, only immigrants who arrived unfit eventually returned to Europe.¹⁰ Europeans tend to dispute this idea, asserting that European migrants arrived fit but that exploitation by American employers ruined their bodies. Immigrants

⁸ Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

⁹ One exception is Bruno Ramirez with Yves Otis, Crossing the 49th Parallel: Migration from Canada to the United States, 1900-1930 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001). Ramirez focus one chapter on remigration, but only on remigration to the United States.

¹⁰ Mark Wyman, Round-Trip to America. The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880-1930, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 4.

themselves tended to blame unsafe working conditions, and condemned what they saw as a relentless pace of work in the American system that left no considerations for special holidays, name days or family business, even illness. As Chapter 4 shows, many individuals did exceedingly well upon return, and it may be that a high degree of remigration is a better indication of a successful labour migration than is a strong persistence.

Succeeding or failing, large numbers returned, but Wyman claims that it is evident that the traditional explanation for returning – planned temporary labour migration – is insufficient to understand why some left when others stayed. The reasons for returning, he writes, varied from anger at bosses to homesickness. The story of the remigrants, however, reveals the importance of human feelings and emotions in world events. That millions of immigrants left a country of relatively high standard of living to return to what often were backward peasant villages stands as a supreme testimony to the pull of kin and home. In the final analysis, the story of returning immigrants is a record of the endurance of home and family ties. It provides evidence that immigration demonstrated the strength and the unity of family – both in going and in returning – rather than the family’s weakening or destruction.¹¹

Like many Italians, Swedes were often cast as “sojourners,” single male immigrants who stayed in Canada for brief stints in order to make money to bring back home. Robert Harney notes that most male immigrants in the twentieth century shared the conditions of sojourners, living emotionally starved lives isolated in male-only work camps.¹² Unlike the Swedish immigrants, Italian sojourners worked in a “padrone” system, where a compatriot arranged work for new immigrants. Chapter 4 shows that Swedish Canadian Pacific Railway workers in British

¹¹ Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*.

¹² Robert Harney, “Boarding and Belonging: Thoughts on Sojourner Institutions,” *Urban History Review* 2-78 (1978): 10; and Robert Harney, “Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930,” in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi ed. *The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America*, (Toronto, 1978).

Columbia often hired friends and relatives from their home parish. This employment system differed from that Harney describes, since it was based on kinship rather than profit. Harney claims that the Italian padrone system, which sold places of employment to compatriots who were nevertheless strangers, had a “callous, exploitive, and often dishonest” quality that seems absent among the Swedish railway workers who did not benefit financially by hiring family and friends.¹³ Thus, while migrant workers relied on each other to provide employment and security, a combination of traditions from the homeland and opportunities in the receiving country determined the characteristics of this labour exchange.

Return migration has certainly been connected to the struggles of the North American labour movement. Historians have used the term sojourner to explain immigrant behaviours, in particular those related to working-class activism. For example, Mark Wyman argues that sojourners had no long-term interest in improving work conditions, and were therefore less concerned with unions and unwilling to strike. Carmela Patrias, however, shows that despite a common argument that sojourners were notoriously difficult to engage in worker protests, immigrant workers at times participated in and even organized strikes. Studies on Chinese immigrants in B.C. suggest that the concept of sojourning is tainted. Timothy Stanley protests that historians only apply the term to labourers, while middle-class men, however temporary their stay in Canada, are not described as sojourners. Anthony Chan sees the term as imposed, since “few Chinese actually saw themselves as mere sojourners.”¹⁴ Thus, the definition

¹³ Robert Harney, “The Padrone System and Sojourners in the Canadian North, 1885-1920,” in Gerald Tulchinsky ed., *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives* (Copp Clark Longman Ltd: Toronto, 1994), 262.

¹⁴ Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 204; Carmela Patrias, “Relief Strikes: Immigrant Workers and the Great Depression in Crowland, Ontario, 1930-1935,” in Franca Iacovetta et al, ed, *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (Toronto 1998), 322-358; Timothy Stanley, “‘Chinamen, Wherever We Go’: Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911,” *Canadian Historical Review* 77.4 (December 1996): 475-503; Anthony B. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver, BC 1983), 128. Several studies have also been done on Italian sojourners in Canada. For example, see Harney, “Boarding and Belonging,” 8-37; and Bruno Ramirez and Michele Del Balzo, “The Italians of

“sojourner” seems arbitrary and imposed, making it difficult to explain behaviours solely based on whether or not a person is believed to intend to remain in Canada, or whether he or she was actively structuring occupational and political responses based on a planned return to the homeland.

European historians have been more curious as to what causes emigrants to return home, and what ideas or technological improvement they imported on their return. Chapter 4 suggests that the returning Swedes to the parish of Långasjö did not gain any agricultural skills or learn new techniques from North America; the opposite was often the case. Since most returnees had worked in other industries than agriculture, they were unlikely to be familiar with new farming practices and the skills they had gained working for the railway or mines in B.C. were of limited value on the barley fields in Sweden. In *Tur och retur America* (*Return trip America*), however, Hans Lindblad and Ingvar Henricsson claim that remigrants from America imported democracy to Sweden. They argue that scholars underestimate how American democratic ideals resonated among the Swedish people during the years when Liberals and Social Democrats pushed through Swedish democracy. According to Lindblad and Henricsson, religious freedom and the Swedish fight for working-class voting privileges were American inspired, as was the women’s emancipation movement, and the prohibitionist movement that proved so vital to the rise of social democracy. The most fanatic anti-emigration propagandist, Lindblad adds, was most often an equally fanatical antidemocrat, a propagandist for corporatism and fascism. The people in the north were at the forefront of renewal, while the conservative resistance had its headquarters in the capital city and the universities.¹⁵ While these authors conveniently ignore the long social

Montreal: From Sojourning to Settlement, 1900-1921,” in Robert F Harney and J. Vicenza Scarpace ed., *Little Italies in North America* (Toronto 1981), 63-84.

¹⁵ Ingvar Henricsson and Hans Lindblad, *Tur och retur Amerika. Utvandrare som förändrade Sverige* (Stockholm, 1995).

democratic struggle for universal suffrage, they, perhaps unwittingly, reverse a questionable Canadian argument that suggests that radicalism among workers in Western Canada in the first part of the twentieth rose from a strident minority of immigrants who imported socialist views to Canada. According to this argument, working-class protests reflected immigrants' political baggage rather than genuine concern over inhumane working conditions. According to Henricsson and Lindblad, the impulses that brought radical changes to western society originated among workers in North America, and were later imported to countries such as Sweden.¹⁶ Both theories thus imply that the native labour organizations were incapable of making independent assessments of their political and social situation, and to act accordingly to improve their situation.

A different remigration study, Keijo Virtanen's Settlement or Return looks at the Finnish overseas migration between 1860 and 1930. He suggests that as free land in the U.S. became scarcer, the later immigrants became sojourners who planned to return after making enough money overseas to improve their lives in Finland. Virtanen argues that the dichotomy between return and non-return has a micro and a macro level, that is, a mixture of personal motives and socio-economic and demographic factors. Thus, his central goal is to analyze return migration, at the same time as he considers the divergence between permanent immigrants and returnees on the macro- and micro-levels.

The emigration and the return were influenced by many different factors, and while pull-and-push economic factors in the host and the mother country were more important for the first,

¹⁶ Examples of proponents of Western Exceptionalism are David Jay Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier: 1897-1919," The Canadian Historical Review LVIII. 2 (June 1977): 154-175, and Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). For an account refuting the theory, see Jeremy Mouat, "The Genesis of Western Exceptionalism: British Columbia's Hard-Rock Miners, 1895-1903," Canadian Historical Review 71.3 (1990): 317-343.

sentimental reasons dominated in the second. The least likely returnees were labourers who did not have gainful occupations to return to. Farmers made up a high percentage of the remigrants, as did skilled labourers who could find well-paying work on either side of the Atlantic. On the other hand, professionals, such as the middle class, made up a small percentage of the returnees, which Virtanen suggests is contrary to findings from Sweden. The majority of returnees were in their young adult prime; those who left as children or were over 40 had fewer reasons to return. More men than women returned and women's return was less connected to economic cycles than was men's return, mostly due to the fact that their main occupation was domestic servants. Married men were more likely to return than single, which, he says, is different from Swedish findings.¹⁷ The difference may be that Finland had less family migration and thus men returned to their families. Virtanen claims that their low occupational skill and language problems placed Finnish men in labouring positions, but he suggests that sojourners also turned to these rough types of jobs since they paid relatively well. For Canada, most returnees had lived in Quebec and Ontario, while British Columbia showed very low remigration rate despite being one of the main destination points.¹⁸

Virtanen's findings thus indicate both similarities and differences with Swedish immigration in British Columbia. As Chapter Three will show, the economy certainly played a role both as a push and a pull factor, but so did other factors. The relative security of an established ethnic community in the receiving country encouraged adventurism in individuals who might normally not emigrate, and remigration might be as much a sign of success as of failure.

¹⁷ Note, however, that Mark Wyman refers to a sawmill district in Sweden where seventy-nine percent of the returnees were married men returning to their families after working for a few years in North America in order to save money for the family in Sweden. Wyman, Round-Trip to America 78.

¹⁸ Keijo Virtanen, Settlement or Return: Finnish Emigrants (1860-1930) in the International Overseas Return Migration Movement (Helsinki: Studia Historica, 1979).

“Swedes on the Move” avoids labelling migrants as sojourners or permanent immigrants, although it recognizes that Swedish workers in Western Canada were a highly mobile group. This mobility was less evident in previous immigration waves to Canada, in particular to farming communities. Lars Ljungmark is one of few Swedish historians who has systematically studied Swedish immigration to Canada, and he concentrates on the Swedish city enclave that emerged in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in the late nineteenth century. Although Ljungmark attempts to discover the origins of these immigrants, he neither analyzes how the Swedish background influenced their choices in Canada, nor does he probe gender issues or inter-ethnic class divisions. Instead, Ljungmark is more interested in how Swedes as a group negotiated a place in Canadian society and how they interacted with other ethnic communities. Ljungmark claims that because Swedes were relatively early immigrants, they tended to identify with the Anglo-Saxon charter group. Despite this sense of closeness, Swedes, as did so many other ethnic groups in Canada, felt betrayed by a sense of suspicion and intolerance from English Canadians who felt increasingly vulnerable in the midst of the inflow of non-English immigrants.¹⁹ This might explain why Swedes though relatively prominent were not politically and culturally active in Winnipeg, except for lending somewhat passive support to the Liberal Party. Their new status as immigrants forced them to concentrate their ambitions on creating an acceptable material standard and a cultural platform of which to frame their cultural life.²⁰ Ljungmark presents a good account on how Swedes coalesced against other ethnic communities, but he does not provide room for much ethnic introspection. As the dearth of Swedish-Canadian historical

¹⁹ For an account how the Anglo-Canadian fear of non-English origin Canadians affected Swedish-Canadians differently during the First and the Second World Wars, see Eva St Jean, "From Defiance to Defence: Swedish-Canadian Ethnic Awareness during the Two World Wars," *American Studies in Scandinavia* 34:2 (2002): 54-84.

²⁰ Lars Ljungmark, *Svenskarna i Winnipeg. Porten till prärien 1872-1940* ((Växjö, Sweden: Emigrantinstitutets vänner, 1994). For an example of popular history of a Swedish group, see Irene Howard, *Vancouver's Svenskar: A History of the Swedish Community in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Vancouver Historical society, 1970).

accounts indicates, Swedes are one of the most under-researched ethnic groups in British Columbia and Canada.²¹ The existing literature does raise the question of the relationship between immigrants' backgrounds in their country of origin and their economic, social and political roles after arrival in Canada.

In order to provide an answer, I have used a straightforward methodology that nonetheless at times was complicated by limitations in official records, such as Swedish emigration registers, the Canadian Census, and B.C. Vital Events records. Each chapter looks at different aspects of the immigration experience, from comparing the two counties in order to glean the "push and pull" effects, to taking into account how group migration affected both groups who stayed behind in Sweden and the Swedish communities in British Columbia, to how the migration process shaped migrants on an individual basis.

Each topic nonetheless first provides context by showing how their Swedish background may have influenced different groups of immigrants or individuals. Since Swedish immigration history is overwhelmingly a male story, the experience of Swedish women in British Columbia is in a separate chapter. Chapter 3 and 4 discuss a group of migrants from the Swedish parish of Långasjö, and the expanded discussion of the social, political, and economic structure of the home parish helps to illuminate its relative importance to the immigrant's decisions in British Columbia. Thus, the study has a macro level where it looks at Sweden's and British Columbia's social, political and economic development, and a median community level where it discusses a

²¹ David Delafenêtre suggests that the Canadian vision on multiculturalism has hampered Scandinavian research, and that recent emphasis on ethnic tolerance has lowered scholars' appreciation of groups whose ethnicity is difficult to measure. David Delafenêtre, "The Scandinavian Presence in Canada: Emerging Perspective," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 27.2 (1995): 35. In comparison, there is a plethora of Swedish-American historical works. One good comparison to Swedes in British Columbia is Janet Rasmussen's oral history of early twentieth-century Scandinavian immigrants to the state of Washington. Her reliance on immigrants' own voices personalizes the immigration experience, but it also prevents her from drawing general conclusions. Still, the text is a useful source for future comparisons between Swedes in British Columbia and their compatriots in the neighbouring American state of Washington. J. E. Rasmussen, *New Land, New Lives: Scandinavian Immigrants to the Pacific Northwest*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

particular agrarian group from a single parish. Since the study also looks at individuals, it incorporates a micro level where I have followed migrants' Swedish family history, the immigration journey, and the individual's history after arrival in North America. This is particularly true in Chapter 6, which contrasts the lives of three Swedish politicians in B.C. It is, however, on the median and the micro level where complications occur.

This dissertation is built on a wide variety of very rich primary sources. One of the most remarkable are the Swedish Church books that permit a detailed examination of families, thus allowing insight into how migration affected both those who left and those who stayed behind. Sweden started to rely on Church records for population statistics in 1686 when the Church enjoined parish priests to keep records of all parishioners. Through time other means to count the population were introduced, such as income tax records and personal identification numbers,²² but Church books complemented modern censuses until 1978 when computers made these handwritten records obsolete. In many ways, modern population counts fall short by lacking the detailed and personalized comments made by the parish priests. Adult single women's movements and occupations were faithfully recorded, if albeit not as closely as were those of their brothers. Priests were more focused on men's occupation, and historical studies indicate a high correspondence between men's work titles in Church and in private employment records.²³ Church records are comparable to other population counts, and inaccuracies rarely exceeded two percent.²⁴ These records are therefore rewarding and reliable sources of information on population movement, occupational titles, and family formation.

²² Personal identification numbers, however, were not introduced until 1947.

²³ This is true for Bengt Berglund's study on employees in Jönköping's match factory in the years 1875 and 1900, and B. Rondahl's inquiry into a sawmill district in the province of Hälsingland, 1865-1910. Bengt Berglund, "Husförhörslängdernas befolkningsstatistiska källvärde," *Historisk Tidskrift* (1978): 53-55, and 77.

²⁴ Christer Winberg, *Folkökning och proletarisering och proletarisering. Kring den sociala strukturovandlingen på Sveriges landsbygd under den agrara revolutionen*, (Göteborg, Sweden, 1975), 150.

Nevertheless, historians have not fully used Church records because to do so is labour intensive and awkward in longer time studies.²⁵ Each ledger covers only a few years, normally a five-year period, and the books are organized according to villages, with separate pages for each croft and farm. The husband's name and occupational title is at the top of the page, with the wife and children listed underneath according to birth order. As the children matured and ventured into paid labour, work titles appeared alongside their names. If a person from the household left the parish, or worked temporarily in another village within the parish, this was pencilled in together with date of departure and return. The records lack precision, however, in recording teenagers who worked as temporary farmhands, perhaps because this was seen as a natural part of pre-adult life, rather than waged labour.²⁶ It is therefore difficult to calculate the percentage of teenage farm workers during the agricultural high season, or from what social stratum they originated. Nevertheless, since this type of population tally is continuous rather than incremental, one can follow a person through several work places and residencies, and note the dates of marriages, deaths, or birth.

Since the dissertation analyses the background of individuals as of groups, several Swedish and Canadian databases have also been invaluable. By being able to locate and identify individuals in British Columbia and in Sweden, this process allows researchers to verify information, thus increasing the chances of identifying and tracking specific migrants. Sweden has computerized the names of over one million emigrants who left in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on two different databases, making it possible to find birth date, marital

²⁵ Apart from Bengt Berglund, a few of the historians who have relied on Church records are Ulla Rosén, Christer Winberg and Christer Persson.

²⁶ Berglund notes that Church records do not seem to pay attention to the agricultural need of seasonal labour. Berglund, "Husförhörlängdernas befolkningsstatistiska källvärde," 55.

status, and most often pre-emigration occupation.²⁷ The databases also provide exact date of emigration and planned destination – at times specifying small towns such as Matsqui, while at other times simply noting “North America.” Likewise, the B.C. Vital Events provide a wealth of information regarding marital status, time of immigration in Canada, length of stay in the province, the municipality where the death occurred, and in some instances, the names and the home county of the Swedish parents. Since the Death Certificates provide the exact date of demise, they allow further, often very fruitful searches through obituaries in Swedish-Canadian newspapers. By combining the information from emigration records in Sweden with the Vital Events, one can trace specific migrants and deduce what occupational changes immigration brought. Thus, through the different Swedish and Canadian sources one can trace individuals from Sweden to B.C., and then obituaries add a remarkable amount of detail of their lives in British Columbia.

The B.C. Vital Statistics were also a source of some frustration. Deaths that took place within the last twenty years, marriages within seventy-five, and births within one hundred are not accessible because of privacy regulations. Immigrants who arrived in the 1920s and survived into the mid 1980s are hidden in the statistics, making it difficult to ascertain whether or not they remained in the province, and naturally making it much more difficult to find them in obituaries.

Likewise, while Marriage Certificates are a rich source of information that otherwise is difficult to unearth, the early cut-off point for public access has a particular effect when researching women. Since women assumed their husbands' names, women who had been active in Swedish-Canadian organizations “disappeared” in most records after marriage. This phenomenon was further exacerbated by a tendency of only identifying women with the title

²⁷ Nonetheless, it still is not possible to locate all emigrants. Some emigrated from Norway, Denmark, or Germany; others travelled under assumed names, or the spelling of their names was corrupted by hurried ships' clerks. Thus, it is necessary to verify the identity of the subjects with birthdates and other corroborating information.

“Mrs” and the last name. Thus, while it is possible to trace a single woman from occupational or club records in British Columbia to the Swedish emigration records, and thereby learning much about her pre-migration background, when that woman’s name suddenly disappears from the minutes of Swedish-Canadian organizations it impossible to deduce if she returned to Sweden, stayed in North America but left the province, or got married and remained active for many decades under the guise of her husband’s identity. Naturally, not being able to access the post-1926 Marriage Certificate also closed doors when trying to trace a woman from B.C. back to Sweden, since the emigration records only registered her under her maiden name. Nevertheless, the Marriage Certificate was one of the few documents that provided data on occupation to the women and their fathers. It is therefore possible to follow a Swedish man from his occupation and status in Sweden through his life in British Columbia, while women tend to become compartmentalized in their separate life stages, making it difficult to follow them from single to married identity.

A different stumbling block for historians who attempt to follow groups in Canada over several decades is the inconsistency of the Canadian Census. Its tendency to change categories and groupings of nationalities from census to census makes it difficult to do sustained studies. For example, while censuses prior to 1921 break down the population of small towns into various nationalities, later censuses do not. Conversely, while the censuses of 1931 and later show Scandinavians as a grouping in the occupational table, earlier censuses lump them under “Europe.” A final hurdle is the fact that individual-level census information is not available to researchers for any census after 1901. This hinders determining the number and ethnic blend among boarders in Swedish female-run boarding houses and hotels, most of which were established during and after the 1910s. Such a study would have shown if Swedish boarding

houses contained a similar trend of ethnic and religious clustering as indicated in Peter Baskerville's study of boarding houses in six Canadian cities.²⁸ Therefore the Canadian Census both beckons and frustrates, and must be approached like a puzzle where several different pieces are needed to reconstruct a whole picture of an ethnic group.

Some terms need clarification. "Swede" might seem a straightforward denotation of nationality, but since the purpose is to define an ethnic group and to judge if radical attitudes were imported or the results of native B.C. labour conditions, the reader needs to be aware how this thesis interprets these concepts.²⁹ For many Canadians, ethnic roots play an important role several generations after the original immigration. Nevertheless, there is a point when values and traditions of the origin country become less important than values learned in Canada. For the United States, Inga Holmberg warns that while some Swedish communities indicate a survival of Swedish values they are examples of a new culture that is neither Swedish nor American but constructed by the immigrant community. As an example, she argues that rather than proclaiming Swedish consciousness, the display of Swedish trinkets is anachronistic and she suggests the development of an American phenomenon that distinguishes Americans who call themselves Swedish-Americans from other Americans.³⁰ These observations raise questions

²⁸ Peter Baskerville, "Familiar Strangers: Urban Families with Boarders, Canada, 1901," *Social Science History* 25.3 (2001): 321-346.

²⁹ Mark Leier, for instance, complains that historians, such as A. Ross McCormack, refer vaguely to "ethnicity" when arguing that British immigrants initiated the B.C. union movement. "Nowhere," Leier argues, "is ethnicity clearly defined by these authors; they do not distinguish between place of birth, culture, upbringing, work experience, or initial union activity." See Mark Leier, "Ethnicity, Urbanism, and the Labour Aristocracy: Rethinking Vancouver Trade Unionism, 1889-1909," *Canadian Historical Review* 74.4 (1993): 515, note # 8.

³⁰ Inga Holmberg, "Swedish Immigrants and the American Society : Problems of Ethnicity, Ethnic Pluralism and Assimilation," in *Encounters with Strangers: Aspects of the American Experience*, ed. Göran Rystad (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1995), 32 and 73. Likewise, Dag Blanck suggests the Augustana School in Chicago created a Swedish-American ethnic consciousness that deviated from a pure Swedish culture. See Dag Blanck, "An Invented Tradition: The Creation of a Swedish-American Ethnic Consciousness at Augustana College," *Scandinavia Overseas: Patterns of Cultural Transformation in North America and Australia*, eds. Harald Runblom and Dag Blanck (Uppsala, Sweden: Centre for Multiethnic Research, 1990), 85. Alan Anderson in Canada, however, reached a contrary conclusion. He suggests that the prevalence of Swedish trinkets in Swedish-Canadian

regarding the viability of all ethnic cultures since they argue that rather than being merely static, a transplanted community mutates into a unique expression that is removed both from the original and the adopted nation. With that in mind, I distinguished between Swedish-born and Swedish or Scandinavian-origin immigrants. I also interviewed mainly first and second generation Swedes where the latter typically emigrated as children from Sweden or were born shortly after arrival in Canada.³¹ In this case, when the family was recently removed from the mother country, it seems reasonable to assume that the second generation, although not raised in Sweden, adopted enough cultural values from its parents to reflect a Swedish point of view.

Related problematic terms are “Scandinavian” and “Swede-Finn,” which are important in order to understand the Swedish involvement in the International Woodworkers of America, as discussed in Chapter 5. For six and a half centuries Sweden dominated Finland, and the Swede-Finns are the descendants of Swedish imperial bureaucrats and landowners. They left behind people with Swedish origin and language who, through time, perceived their loyalties to be with Finland rather than Sweden.³² The Swede-Finns proved particularly difficult to slot in suitable holes. When they appear in interviews and secondary sources I indicate this in the text or in the footnotes. As for Scandinavia, many texts consider Finland under this heading, but for practical reasons I follow the Canadian census definition that only includes Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

Other expressions that need clarification are more problematic. Militancy and radicalism, for instance, are closely connected concepts that nevertheless do not necessarily occur

homes expresses ethnic consciousness. Alan B. Anderson “Scandinavian Settlements in Saskatchewan: Migration History and Changing Ethnocultural Identity,” *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, 2 (1986): 103.

³¹ Thus, although those arriving in Canada as children may be defined as first generation, I consider all who spent their formative years in Canada as second-generation immigrants.

³² Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19-50, and 163-164.

simultaneously. David Bercuson attempts to separate the two terms, suggesting that radicalism indicates a desire for a fundamental change in the existing social structure, while militancy indicates a willingness to fight for one's rights.³³ He argues that, "western workers were more radical than those of other regions though they were, perhaps, no more militant."³⁴ Hence, Bercuson suggests that although B.C.'s workers were radically inclined, circumstances inhibited militant responses to abuses in the workplace.

While Bercuson concentrated on non-militant radicals, my interviews suggest in particular that some Swedish loggers were militant without being radical. I have been guided by Mark Leier's adaptation of John Bodner's suggestion that "militancy is a measure of the lengths workers will go to in order to win their demands, while radicalism is a measure of how deeply the demands challenge the existing state of affairs."³⁵ Leier, however, cautions that it is difficult to draw a clean line between militancy and radicalism since workers who start out demanding economic improvements without social upheaval may become radicalized by the process itself.³⁶

While I acknowledge Leier's reservation, in the instance of the B.C. forest industry, some Swedish and other union leaders espoused militant actions without radical politics. These workers saw little reason to alter the existing social and political system in British Columbia, but perceived a need for a better policing of the existing system to prevent unscrupulous companies from usurping earnings and benefits that rightfully belonged to the workers. They wanted fair

³³ For a criticism of Bercuson, see Jeremy Mouat, "The Genesis of Western Exceptionalism: British Columbia's Hard-Rock Miners, 1895-1903," *The Canadian Historical Review* 71.3 (1990): 317.

³⁴ David Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier: 1897-1919," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 63.2 (June 1977): 155.

³⁵ Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, 1990), 112-113.

³⁶ Note, though, that some B.C. historians have much broader definition of radicalism. James Conley suggests that radical means a "support for socialist objectives, whether reformist or revolutionary, and support for the mobilization and collective action of workers as a class." James R. Conley, "Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis and the Western Labour Revolt: The Case of Vancouver, 1900-1919," *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (Spring 1989): 10.

pay for honest work and did not hesitate to use their labour as leverage to force companies into complying with existing rules.

Finally, in order to understand the personal effects of migration, I used over twenty interviews, most of which I conducted, but some that were done by other researchers and later archived. I have also studied letters written by both male and female Swedish immigrants, ranging from the early 1900s to the mid 1930s. Both sources provide helpful insights, but with different advantages. Interviews allow subjects to reflect on previous events from a distance, and by analysing their historic participation they can judge how it fitted a greater scheme. Such narratives, however, often present an air of inevitability as if crossroads in life's journey were clearly marked, and when distance dulls some of the sharper joys and pains of the migration process the remembrance might suggest an air of effortlessness. Letters therefore serve as counterweight to the deliberate reflection in interviews. Written while the subjects were in the midst of the action and the future unclear, they highlight the uncertainty most immigrants faced. Combined, letters and interviews provide unique insights in the lives of immigrants.

This caution concerning interviews and letters is of course true with any historical document, written or otherwise. It is a self-evident danger that the perceived audience and the motives of the speaker affected the content. A young male immigrant would most likely phrase his letters differently to his perhaps anxious parents than he would while full of bravado writing to male friends. Likewise, an interviewee, keenly aware of the larger audience, might wish to justify past actions thus suppressing choices that seem less wise in retrospect, while emphasising others that seemed more acceptable or flattering. Such concerns are not limited to letters or oral history. The style and rhetoric might differ in various documents, but each writer had an intended audience in mind and a specific motive behind the authorship – whether political, personal or

professional – and equal care must be taken when examining either government reports, association minutes, or personal memoirs.

Thus, “Swedes on the Move” approaches migration history from a holistic rather than from a narrow thematic angle, and takes into account the role of the family, class, gender expectations, economy, and the structure of the migration process itself. Chapter 2 add background information by surveying the economic and political history of Sweden and of British Columbia in order to provide context to help readers judge how the Swedish background influenced the immigrants in British Columbia. The third and fourth chapters measure the migration experience from a select group that traded life in a small rural community in Sweden to wage work in British Columbia. Besides looking at the cultural background, and examining how emigration changed the conditions for those who stayed behind, they examine the emigrants’ occupational and social history in British Columbia. Chapter 5 studies the union involvement of Swedish and Scandinavian loggers on Vancouver Island, while Chapter 6 –a case study on three men who had political careers in British Columbia – looks at Swedish political involvement in British Columbia. The final chapter concerns Swedish women and questions if their scarcity status within their national group in British Columbia led to an increase in power in sexual relationships or in the Swedish community.

Thus, by using and combining several different types of primary documents and population databases in Sweden and Canada, this thesis follows and expands on recent previous work on immigration in Canada. It acknowledges the importance of the homeland but avoids simplifying trends in Sweden in order to explain behaviours in British Columbia. “Swedes on the Move” therefore seeks to build on and go beyond previous critiques of the theory of “western

exceptionalism” by showing that in most forms of human interaction, be it political or cultural, it is conditions of the receiving country that foremost determine individual action.

Chapter 2: Sweden to British Columbia – A Working-Class Migration

In the course of a century, Sweden moved from being a country in the periphery of capitalism with a conservative politics and a peasant economy, to one of the most industrialized nations in the western world. Historians attribute this development to various causes. Some cite the rise of a politically and economically savvy labour movement; others credit a generally literate population, while others again point to international circumstances outside Sweden's sphere of influence. Sweden, however, did not develop uniformly either in terms of industries or working-class consciousness. Regional differences influenced types of industries, and workers had different motivations, needs, and political strengths that affected their will and ability to organize in labour unions. This chapter will provide a synopsis of Sweden's and British Columbia's economic history, the rise of the labour movement and the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) in Sweden, and of B.C.'s political history, 1900-1950.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Sweden experienced one of the strongest economic growths in the western world. Between 1850 and 1910, the increase in real wages and gross national product surpassed the national and individual income of France, Great Britain, Germany and the United States, and Sweden remained an economic front-runner until the 1950s.¹ Sweden was able to ride the tail of nineteenth-century European industrialization, and benefit from the increasing demands for foodstuff and building material such as wood and iron elsewhere in Europe. A new economic liberalism facilitated the rapid switch from a peasant to an export economy and gave rise to a bourgeois trading class. An upgraded banking system, a simplified guild system, free trade, and freedom of movement for migratory labour eased the way for a livelier domestic economy. The creation of an industrial economy also created a new working class who traded the countryside for the new industrial centres. These changes did not occur instantly, however, and agriculture continued to employ the greatest number of individuals until the 1930s, even if industry bypassed agriculture as the strongest economic sector in the 1890s.²

The emphasis on exports fed a domestic industrial development and certain areas became focal points for workers who left the countryside for employment in sawmills and mines. Mines in the far north encouraged colonization of a previously inhospitable area, sawmills mushroomed along the central and northern coast, textile industries shot up in the west, while the southeast still relied on agriculture, and the south combined

¹ Lennart Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia. Tillväxt och omvandling under två sekel*, [*A modern Swedish economic history. Growth and change during two centuries*] (Stockholm: SNS, 2000), 220-225.

² In 1900, fifty-five percent of gainfully employed worked in the agricultural sector and twenty percent in the industry. In 1930, one in three worked in agriculture and one in four in the industry. Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 233.

agriculture with industrialized urban areas. The fertile southern lowlands developed a strong commercialized agriculture, although, as Chapter 3 will show, farmers in the southeast struggled to support their families. Despite the importance of the forest industry, the northern parts were long steeped in poverty and lacked any major manufacturing industries.³ Urbanization and increased labour mobility also created new social conditions. The construction and service industry grew, and the new working class fortified a previously modest domestic agricultural market.

Rapid economic growth may also be explained by an unusual degree of human capital that sprang from a highly developed school system and a growing population base. Despite high emigration, the Swedish population expanded from 3.5 million to 5.5 million between the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Farmers often lacked enough land for all of their surviving children, which led to the proletarianization of their sons and daughters.⁴ Compared to most western nations, Sweden had an unusually well educated population, and this high level of training helped the industrial development.⁵ By 1850, “Sweden was the most literate country in Europe,” with a 90 percent literacy rate.⁶ This high literacy rate benefited industry, and the ensuing economic development in turn helped the working-class to become better organized as it became more defined and homogenous.

³ Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 216.

⁴ Lars Olsson and Lars Ekdahl, *Klass i rörelse. Arbetarrörelsen i svensk samhällsutveckling [Class in movement. The Labour movement in Swedish social change]* (Stockholm: Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek, 2002), 9.

⁵ Lars G. Sandberg, “The Case of the Impoverished Sophisticate: Human Capital and Swedish Economic Growth before World War I,” *Journal of Economic History* 34 (1979): 225-242. See for example the 1885 report card of Erik Ersson who graduated at after nine semesters of instruction at age thirteen. His subjects were reading; biblical history; catechism; writing; mathematics up to multiplication; Swedish language; geography; biology; geometry; and art. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the original document.

⁶ Sandberg, “The Case of the Impoverished Sophisticate,” 230.

As Chapter 6 will indicate, local industrial variations created different circumstances for workers to coalesce either politically or in unions. The first unions that appeared in the mid nineteenth century were intended to support guilds that felt threatened by industrial development and unskilled workers. As the guilds changed, once sharp internal boundaries between craftsman, journeyman and worker blurred. Workers from all layers came into contact with each other and started to cooperate, which affected working-class culture.⁷ In the 1880s, labour migrants from Germany and Denmark introduced socialism, a new doctrine that advocated protection for vulnerable industrial workers.⁸ Thus, the early organizations that had concentrated on protecting the trades grew to consider other workers as well.

Despite a militant and responsive working class, the progress of the Swedish labour movement was spotty. Dramatic growth between 1902 and 1907 imparted a deceptive sense of the strength of the union movement until the devastating losses in the 1909 general strike. Klas Åmark maintains that the political changes that brought liberalism to Sweden in the mid-nineteenth century allowed for a general democratization of society that was characterized by a low state involvement that benefited union formation. Workers' organizational power, however, depended on their level of "replaceability." The easier it was for an employer to replace a worker, the more difficult it was to organize in that sector. Organisations catering to skilled workers were less affected by lockouts and strikes, but unskilled workers were sensitive to economic fluctuation and suffered from internal competition that drove wages down and made them

⁷ Lars Edgren, "Hantverkarna och arbetarkulturen: en aspekt av klassformering," [*Tradesmen and work culture: an aspect of the class formation*] *Scandia* 56 (1990): 232-256, and 267-268.

⁸ Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 269.

vulnerable to management demands.⁹ While metal workers, miners, and sawmill workers responded to the appeal from organisers, vast employment sectors resisted union development, perhaps as much for cultural reasons as for the workers' replaceability. Two significant labour groups that were very prominent in the Swedish migration movement to British Columbia – farmers and forest workers – were largely absent in the Swedish union movement. Farmers and farm workers were traditionally suspicious of unions, and the proletarianization process that had been ongoing since the mid nineteenth century forced an increasing number of farmers' children into waged labour, which often proved to be the forest industry. The farming influence contributed to the forest workers' notorious low union membership even during periods when the Swedish labour movement was generally strong.¹⁰ Thus, while unions were overall successful in retaining members, their strength fluctuated through time, and by no means did they incorporate all segments of the working class.

The Swedish labour movement was also helped by its close relationship to the Social Democratic Labour Party, its political arm. Göran Therborn argues that the Swedish Social Democratic Party is unique among other western countries both for its longevity as the government after 1933 and its working-class based support. It was Sweden's first mass political movement, and it worked in synchrony with other popular

⁹ Klas Åmark, *Facklig makt och fackligt medlemskap. De svenska fackförbundens medlemsutveckling 1890-1940*, [*Union power and union membership. The Swedish unions membership development 1890-1940*] (Lund, 1986), 22-24, 87 and 91.

¹⁰ Johnny Hjelm claims that the union membership among forest workers in the 1930s fluctuated between five and eight percent, which was very low compared to other industrial sectors in Sweden at that time. It was not until after the World War II that the membership increased to over fifty percent, but it remained notoriously low throughout the twentieth century. Johnny Hjelm, "Forest Work and Mechanization – Changes in Sweden and Canada during the Post-War Period," *Polhem. Tidskrift för teknikhistoria* 3.12 (1994): 262; and Bo Persson, *Skogens skördemän. Skogs- och flottningsarbetareförbundets kamp för arbete och kollektivavtal 1918-1927* (Lund, Sweden: Arkiv, 1991); 222. [*The Harvesters of the Forest: The Forest Workers and River Drivers Union's Fight for Work and Collective Bargaining 1918-1927.*]

movements such as the International Order of Good Templars and labour study circles. The SDLP turned reformist early on, and used revolutionary impulses among the people during 1917-1919 to pursue social democratic goals in ways that were acceptable to the general population.¹¹ James Fulcher claims it initially functioned as a federation whose main task was to supervise union activities.¹² The SDLP enjoyed support amongst militant Swedish workers who organized strong unions in the late nineteenth century. Some national unions, however, took umbrage at having a political party coordinating their affairs, and, in 1898 the SDLP founded the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions¹³ (*Landsorganisationen, LO*) to function as the Swedish union congress.¹⁴ Although Swedish unions initially organized mostly along craft lines, the LO soon developed industrial unions and strongly encouraged unskilled workers to organize.¹⁵ The labour movement felt it was particularly important to unionize industries that covered large areas, and the threat of a general strike became one of the LO's most effective weapons.¹⁶ Sweden experienced more strikes in the early twentieth century than any other Western country, and those many work-related conflicts stand as a measure of the

¹¹ Göran Therborn, "A Unique Chapter in the History of Democracy: The Social Democrats in Sweden," in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klas Misgeld, 1-34 (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.)

¹² James Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State: Conflict and Co-operation in Britain and Sweden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 53. For other accounts of the early Swedish Social Democratic movement see Klas Åmark, "Social Democracy and the Trade Union Movement: Solidarity and the Politics of Self-Interest," in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klaus Misgeld et al (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992), 67-96.

¹³ Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 39. Note however, that although both Bo Persson, and Klaus Misgeld in *Creating Social Democracy*, translate LO as a *trade-union confederation*, Fulcher shows that LO also encouraged industrial union development.

¹⁴ Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State*, 55 and 37.

¹⁵ Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State*, 46. The unskilled Swedish workers founded their first union, the Labourers' and Factory Workers' Union, in 1891, and up to 1906 it remained Sweden's largest union.

¹⁶ Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State*, 53. As an example, Fulcher mentions the railway workers, but loggers would also fit this category since much of Sweden is forested and a national logging strike would therefore cover a large area.

radical potential in this small, sparsely populated country.¹⁷ Consequently, within a comparatively brief period, Sweden developed a highly centralized union system, and it did not take long for the employers to respond accordingly.

As a countermeasure to the LO, Swedish employers organized into various confederations, the most important being the highly centralized Swedish Employers' Confederation (*Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen*, SAF) created in 1902.¹⁸ When LO forced SAF to recognize workers' right to organize in 1906, collective bargaining became the accepted means of negotiation.¹⁹ With its willingness to cooperate, and aided by its close collaboration with the Social Democratic Party, the LO became both reformist and socialistic in character.²⁰ After 1938, the balance of labour power in Sweden rested mainly on cooperation between LO and SAF, and the latter "accepted their role, which made negotiation and the policy of collective agreements possible."²¹ Evidently, then, both unions and employers' associations favoured centralized federations that coordinated activities and assisted their respective members during labour disputes.

Despite the seeming success of the Swedish labour movement, its grasp on its membership was provisional until the 1930s. Most unions suffered huge losses in membership during a major labour conflict in 1909-1910. The Swedish economy had declined in the first decade of the 1900s, and in 1908 industry sought to cut losses by

¹⁷ Persson, *Skogens skördemän* 33-34. See also Åmark, "Social Democracy and the Trade Union Movement," 70-73, and Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State*, 331-332. Fulcher's charts show that between 1903-1929 the Swedish workers' strike actions were more than quadruple those of the English workers in the same period.

¹⁸ Åmark "Social Democracy and the Trade Union Movement," 68. Although other employer's organization existed, by 1907 SAF was the largest. See also Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State*, 73, and Lars-Arne Norberg, *Sveriges historia under 1800- och 1900-talen. Svensk samhällsutveckling 1809-1992*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993), 145.

¹⁹ Norberg, *Sveriges historia*, 145-146.

²⁰ Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 266.

²¹ Åmark, "Social Democracy and the Trade Union Movement," 69.

reducing wages. As income fell, sporadic strikes broke out. When the SAF declared a widespread lockout in 1909, LO called for a general strike. The strike dragged on, and workers, who generally lacked any kind of financial buffer, suffered almost immediately. The employers were able to weather the loss of income, since several banks volunteered to help with credit and other funding. In contrast, the cash-strapped unions were unable to give even a minimum of long-term financial support to striking workers, and the umbrella organization, LO, was forced to call off the strike in the fall of 1909. It was clear that the union movement had suffered a crippling blow. In 1907, Sweden had possessed the most organized union movement in the world, but during the strike the LO lost half of its members. In 1910, the Swedish union membership was one third of that in countries such as Denmark, Austria, Belgium, and England, and it suffered even further decreases during the economic crisis of the early 1920s.²²

The Social Democratic Labour Party also fought a slow, but steady climb to power. In 1909 the Conservative government introduced a modified proportional voting system and at the same time granted the franchise to most adult males, which resulted in a left-wing majority under a Liberal government in 1911, with, Liberals (40%), Conservatives (31%), and SDLP (28.5%); clearly, the SDLP was a serious contender for political power.²³ Still, although debilitating lockouts and strikes, and widespread unemployment 1920-1922 might have radicalized the voters, the Social Democratic Labour Party was unable to form a lasting independent government until after the 1932

²² Åmark, *Facklig makt*, 110.

²³ Karl Molin, "Historical Orientation," in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klaus Misgeld et al. (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1992) xx, and Stig Hadenius, *Svensk politik under 1900-talet. Konflikt och samförstånd*. [*Swedish politics during the 1900s. Conflict and cooperation*] (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1995), 273.

election.²⁴ This was the result both of internal difficulties and of the fact that the conservative parties were better able to mobilize their core voting groups in the 1920s than were the Social Democrats.²⁵ After the party split in 1917 when the radical faction left to create the Communist party, the SDLP became even more reformist in character, which broadened its appeal to the voters. Between 1920 and 1932, Swedish politics remained unstable, with no less than twelve different prime ministers taking turns trying to bring order into the confusion.²⁶ Such was the situation when the Depression hit Sweden in 1930.

Combined with the threat of a second major depression in the course of a decade, two separate incidents in the early 1930s contributed to bring the Social Democratic party into power. With the economic downturn of the 1920s fresh in mind, workers rightly feared similar devastation as the economy plummeted again. The export industries, in particular saw- and pulp mills, were hit hard and quickly reduced wages. Affected workers and their sympathizers responded by shutting down plants. When one pulp mill in Ådalen, a valley in the northeast (*Västernorrland*), hired “scabs,” workers gathered in protest, broke into the company grounds, and in the ensuing melee assaulted some of the strikebreakers. As the military was called in to protect the strikebreakers, further confrontations were inevitable. In May 1931, soldiers opened fire to break up unarmed demonstrators in Sandviken, Ådalen; four participants and one bystander were killed. After a trial several strike leaders were sent to jail for terms ranging from two months to

²⁴ Prior to the general strike and lockout in 1909, the SDLP had a membership of 112 693. After the disastrous working-class defeat, the SDLP lost 50 percent of its members, and in 1910 only had 55 248 registered members. Olsson and Ekdahl, *Klass i rörelse*, 187.

²⁵ Olsson and Ekdahl, *Klass i rörelse*, 57.

²⁶ Hadenius, *Svensk politik under 1900-talet*, 53-56.

two and a half years, while the military commander and the soldiers were acquitted.²⁷ To this day, “the shots in Ådalen” symbolize the imperatives of working-class organization.

Before Sweden had time to come to terms with this incident, an international financial scandal rocked the Swedish banking system and blighted the confidence of the small-time saver. In 1932, the Swedish match manufacturer, Ivar Kreuger, committed suicide after declaring bankruptcy, and subsequent investigations revealed that the Swedish banking system had lost heavily after granting several large loans to Kreuger. Swedes felt doubly betrayed, thinking that banks were allowed to play monopoly with their hard-earned savings, while the military was encouraged to raise arms against workers. In the 1932 election, Swedish voters put into power a minority Social Democratic government that would become one of the most politically successful in the democratic world.²⁸

The SDLP became a very popular government. Surprisingly, much of its success was due to the same Great Depression that wrought such havoc to Canadian economy and politics. Few western countries escaped the international depression of the 1930s with similar ease. The gross national product surpassed pre-depression figures in 1934, and the whole 10-year period rivalled all previous decades in terms of Swedish economic growth. The traditional explanation for this amazing turnaround was that the Social Democratic government pushed an aggressive Keynesian economic politics. Lennart Schön, however, argues that Sweden was also helped by other equally important factors, such as German mobilization that required Swedish raw material, an available and flexible labour pool, and a responsive banking system that facilitated industrial adjustments. Schön also points

²⁷ Lars Berggren and Mats Greiff, *En svensk historia från vikingatid till nutid*, [*Swedish history from the vikings to the present*] (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000), 255.

²⁸ Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 341-46.

to demographic changes that aided economic growth, such as an unusually strong 20-29 age group that encouraged the expansion of domestic housing construction and industries that catered to household formation.²⁹ A third explanation of its success was the coalition the SDLP entered with the agrarian party *Bondeförbundet*, which further secured economic and political stability.³⁰ Finally, with the social democrats in power, the Confederation of Trade Unions gained political power as never before, and the added sense of political security strengthened its already reformist tendencies. A stable economy definitely became more important than socialization. The union reasoned that increased production would lead to higher wages, and in 1938 the LO and the SAF shook hands over the famous Saltsjöbadsavtalet that set rules designed to avoid costly conflicts during collective agreement negotiations.³¹ From hereon, Sweden entered a long period of labour peace and steady economic growth at the helm of the Social Democratic Labour Party, a period that also heralded the end of Swedish mass emigration.

Prior to the 1930s, however, Sweden's emigration rates were high, and the exodus of so many able workers had alarmed conservative forces in Sweden. During the 1850-1930 period of industrial development, Sweden went through a demographic transformation that involved a rapid population increase and a high rate of emigration

²⁹ Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia*, 346-57.

³⁰ The agrarian party has resisted identification with either the right or the left political blocks, and is presently named *Centerpartiet*, the Centre Party. Together with the SDLP, however, *Bondeförbundet* participated in formal government coalitions between 1936 and 1939, and 1951 and 1957. See Anders Widfeldt, "Split in the Middle: The European Policy of the Swedish Centre Party," Paper for the Political Studies Association-UK, 50th Annual Conference, London, 2000, (<http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2000/Widfeldt%20Anders.pdf>), 4.

³¹ See also Klas Åmark, "Den svenska modellen. Arbetarnas fackföreningsrörelse och samverkan på svensk arbetsmarknad," [*The Swedish model. Workers' unions and cooperation in the Swedish labour market*] in Arbetsliv och arbetarrörelse. Modern historisk forskning i Sverige, (Stockholm: Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek, 1991), 28-32.

with more than 1.25 million of the population leaving for North America.³² Concerned with this development, the Swedish government undertook a “monumental” emigration study between 1907 and 1913. Under the guidance of Gustav Sundbärg and Nils Wohlin, a study team published 20 volumes with 4 820 pages of articles and recommendations on the reasons behind emigration. Statistical information alone takes up nearly 1 000 pages. The purpose was to uncover what, if any, social circumstances in Sweden influenced emigration, and to what extent external factors played a part.³³

Different political strands in Sweden had different notions on the reasons for emigration and different ideas on how to prevent the further loss of Swedish youth. Although opposition to emigration had been raised as early as 1860, it became more strident after the turn of the century, starting with supporters of a strong national defence who feared the emigration of young men would drain Sweden of military men. The Swedish business world was also concerned. With so many potential workers leaving the country, competition for workers would drive up wages. The third reaction came from a coalition of liberals and socialists who blamed emigration on poor working conditions.³⁴ The left sympathised with workers escaping Sweden at the same time as they deplored American working conditions and suggested that the workers traded ashes for fire. Together with socially engaged liberals, the left sought to use the Commission on Emigration to improve social conditions in Sweden, which, they claimed, would remove the motivation for emigration. Conservatives in Sweden, however, disagreed with the

³² In 1850, Sweden’s population was 3 483 million; 1900 it was 5 136 million; and in 1930 the Swedish population was 6 142 million. See “Svensk Historia: Sveriges befolkning,” <<http://www.tacitus.nu/svenskhistoria/befolkning.htm>> <24 August 2004>.

³³ Emory Lindquist, “Sweden’s Search for Answers: *The Emigration Survey*, Then and Now,” *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 4 (1986): 159-172.

³⁴ Ann-Sofie Källemark, *Reaktionen mot utvandringen: emigrationsfrågan i svensk debatt och politik, 1901-1904*, [*The reaction against emigration: the emigration question in Swedish debate and politics, 1901-1904*] (Stockholm: Studia historica Upsaliensia, 1972).

idea that Swedish social and economic conditions acted as a push factor. Instead, they suggested that shameless immigration agents lured Swedish farm- and industrial workers to the United States, where the immigrants suffered hardship that they were reluctant to divulge in letters home. These letters then deceived a new crop of emigrants, who believed the myth that one really could find gold underneath clumps of grass in America as easily as one could pick potatoes in Sweden.

Since many Swedes left in order to get farmland of their own, a vocal group of Conservatives suggested creating a Swedish alternative to the American homestead movement. *Egnahemsrörelsen* – the homeowner’s movement³⁵ – would allow the landless proletariat to borrow enough to purchase a small plot of land for a reasonable cost. Some liberals initially welcomed the idea, but soon became disenchanted when they realized that the intended farmlands were much too small to support families, and would create a landlocked working class rather than independent small-time farmers. Nonetheless, attempts to stem the outflow of workers were largely unsuccessful until the 1930s erased most economic push-and-pull factors. Until that time, Swedish emigration remained strong, and by the turn of the twentieth century British Columbia had risen in importance as a receiving region.

Swedish immigration to British Columbia and subsequent involvement in its industry and political life was only sporadic before the turn of the twentieth century. In 1884 Swedish officials recorded the first two emigrants destined for Canada, but the Swedish exodus to Canada did not exceed one thousand per year until the 1920s.³⁶ In

³⁵ Note that this and all other translations from Swedish language texts are my own.

³⁶ More than 600 Swedes emigrated yearly to Canada between 1910 and 1913. The First World War strangled the flow, but in response to a Swedish recession in 1923 the numbers rose again, from 303 in 1922 to 1 422 in 1923. As a comparison, 324 285 Swedes emigrated to the U.S. in the decade 1881-1890

total, only 1.2 percent of all Swedish emigrants expected Canada to be their destination.³⁷ Immigration to Canada commenced slowly in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, peaked in the 1920s, and came to a grinding halt at the onset of the Great Depression in the early 1930s. Swedish statistics alone do not suffice to relate the history of Swedish immigration to Canada, but it is clear that Canada received only a tiny part of the total Swedish emigration.³⁸ Since Swedish figures are lower than the actual number of Swedish immigrants in Canada, historians believe that both officials and emigrants failed to distinguish between Canada and its southern neighbour. Emigrants and passport officials alike used “America” as a catchall for the destination point.³⁹

The Canadian statistics tell a different story, and it is clear that many Swedes who originally planned to live in the United States eventually settled north of the border. In 1921, when Swedish emigration statistics indicate that 6 042 Swedes had moved to Canada, the Canadian census listed 27 700 Swedish-born residents.⁴⁰ Thus, Canada received an excess of 20 000 Swedes who for various reasons chose it over the United

alone, but even during the height of the emigration to Canada, Canada never received more than 2 306 Swedish immigrants yearly. See Harald Runblom and Hans Norman, From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 117-118, and 128.

³⁷ While Runblom and Norman give a lower estimation of 1 150 000, Lars Ljungblad argues that recent ship list figures estimates that over 100 000 persons left without officially registering their emigration. Runblom and Norman, From Sweden to America, 69; Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus, translated by Kermit B. Westerberg (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 10-11.

³⁸ It is estimated that between 1/5 and 1/4 of all Swedes living between 1851 and 1930 settled in North America. That means that Sweden had the third highest per capita emigration frequency of all European countries. See Hans Norman and Harald Runblom, Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800 (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987), 129.

³⁹ Norman and Runblom, Transatlantic Connections, 127. One interviewee complained that even in the 1980s some Swedes seemingly confused Canada with the United States. “It was the idea that Canada was part of the U.S.. They talk about “America.” When we were over [in Sweden] in 1986 it finally came to the point where I was correcting people and letting them know that it was a vast difference between Canada and the U.S., and teaching them to say *North America*, that also includes Canada. Some would look at me kind of strange, trying to assimilate this in their mind.” Gunnar Gustafson [pseud.], interview by author, transcript, Vancouver Island, 4.

⁴⁰ Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 7, Numerical distribution of the immigrant population by birthplace, sex and year of arrival in Canada, by provinces, 1921.

States.⁴¹ Conversely, while Swedish statistics indicate that 11 858 persons immigrated to Canada between 1921 and 1930, the Canadian census suggests a mere increase of 6 715 Swedish-born inhabitants.⁴² These inconsistencies reflect both a high remigration and a considerable flow across the border between the United States and Canada.⁴³

Scandinavians, however, were welcomed in Canada, in particular as agricultural workers and domestic servants. Canadian authorities attempted early to entice Swedish emigrants away from the United States, but their efforts often backfired.⁴⁴ In the late nineteenth century, Canadian immigration agents ran a fierce anti-American campaign in Sweden portraying the U.S. regime as “dictatorial,” while simultaneously projecting a pleasing image of Canada.⁴⁵ Because Swedes rarely differentiated between the two nations, the negative propaganda backfired and hindered the Canadian campaign.⁴⁶ Canada did not stop trying, however, and in 1914 the Superintendent of Immigration suggested that the Canadian government mail copies of Swedish and Norwegian-

⁴¹ Many Swedes crossed the border in search of job or business opportunities. P.B. Anderson and Robert Filberg are only two of many who exchanged the U.S. for Canada. At the age of seventeen, Doris Dahlgren’s husband migrated north, thus disobeying orders from his mother in Sweden to remain with relatives in Minnesota. Lars Ljungmark discusses the social impact when American Swedes arrived in the Swedish community in Winnipeg. See P.B. Anderson, “Life History,” September 28, 1954, Unpublished manuscript held by the Campbell River Archives; R.J. Filberg, interview by C. D. Orchard, Comox, 14 June, 1960; Ljungmark, “Swedes in Winnipeg,” 73-74; and Doris Dahlgren [pseud.].

⁴² Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 2, Table 45, Birthplace of the population by sex, for provinces, 1931.

⁴³ While it is possible that American immigration quotas caused some Swedes to state Canada as the receiving country in order to avoid possible difficulties at the American border, Sweden only filled its quota for immigration to the U.S. in 1923. Runblom and Norman, *From Sweden to America*, 128.

⁴⁴ Several Canadian immigration agents attempted to sidestep the official Swedish resistance against emigration. One agent claimed to possess the names and addresses of most farmers in Sweden— most certainly an exaggeration considering the plethora of small farms in this agricultural society. See Mauri A. Jalava, “Scandinavians as a Source of Settlers for the Dominion of Canada: The First Generation 1867-1897,” *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, (1983): 7.

⁴⁵ By projecting a very dark picture of the political and economic situation in the United States, the Swedish press certainly did not help entice emigrants to North America. See Fred Nilsson, *Emigrationen från Stockholm till Nordamerika 1880-1893. En studie i urban utvandring*, [*Emigration from Stockholm to North America. A Study in urban emigration*] Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1970, 249.

⁴⁶ Lars Ljungmark, “Canada: An Alternative for Swedish Emigration to the New World, 1873-1875,” *Swedish-American Quarterly*, 35.3 (1984): 253-266. See also Lars Ljungmark, “Canada’s Campaign for Scandinavian Immigration, 1873-1876,” *Swedish-American Quarterly*, 33.1(1982): 21-42.

language newspapers from Canada to the Scandinavian countries.⁴⁷ Even when the First World War checked international immigration,⁴⁸ Canada continued to press the Swedish government to allow more direct propaganda to entice prospective emigrants.⁴⁹ Despite the affirmative action, Swedish immigration to Canada only became more commonplace after Swedish-Americans began to cross the border in search of available land that was increasingly difficult to find in the United States. This inflow added a decisive “pull” factor to the Canadian propaganda.⁵⁰

When Swedish immigration to Canada increased in the 1920s, it coincided with a change from family to single emigration. At least three-quarters of the emigrants were young men between 15-29 years of age who exchanged their rural home regions for the Canadian prairies or for British Columbia.⁵¹ As Table 2.1 indicates, the Swedish-born population in B.C. grew by sixty-three percent in the 1920s. The dramatic increase testifies to the interest and potentials of a Swedish immigration wave to Canada that was cut short by a devastating depression in Canada and the dawn of a stable Social Democratic government and an economic upswing for the working class in Sweden.

⁴⁷ D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to Bruce Walker, December 22, 1913; and Superintendent of Immigration to W. G. Annable, July 29, 1914, Department of Immigration Records (hereafter DImm), B-715, Vol. 13, File 77 (3), British Columbia Archives (hereon BCA).

⁴⁸ Indeed, correspondence to the Canadian Department of Immigration suggests that Swedes were *persona non grata* during the war since they were suspected of sympathizing with Germany. Superintendent of Immigration to Percy Reid, Acting Commissioner of Immigration, March 22, 1917, DImm, B-715, Vol. 13, File 77 (3), BCA.

⁴⁹ Albert Hermanson to W. J. Egan, Deputy Minister of Immigration, DImm, Vol 245, File 165833, BCA. Hermanson noted that “it is a well-known fact that the Swedish government, backed by public opinion, have for many years been very unfavorably inclined towards emigration and Canada has been no exception in this respect.” As late as 1946, Hugh Dalton of the Canadian Manufacturers Association suggested that the Canadian government import 500 to 700 “selected immigrants experienced in logging . . . [from] the Baltic countries.” DImm, Vol. 230, File 127304, BCA.

⁵⁰ Conversely, an absence of pull factor from any established Icelandic community in the U.S. made possible a large-scale immigration by Icelanders to Canada. See Lars Ljungmark, “Canada’s Campaign,” 30 and 40.

⁵¹ Norman and Runblom, Transatlantic Connections, 156.

Table 2.1. Swedish-born population in Canada and British Columbia, 1921, 1931, and 1941.

| | 1921 | | 1931 | | 1941 | |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Canada | B.C. | Canada | B.C. | Canada | B.C. |
| Total | 27 700 | 5 735 | 34 415 | 9 333 | 27 160 | 7 729 |
| Male | 18 134 | 4 178 | 23 906 | 7 041 | 18 510 | 5 578 |
| Female | 9 566 | 1 557 | 10 509 | 2 292 | 8 650 | 2 149 |

Sources: Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 52, Birthplace of the total population by sex, for provinces, 1921; Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 46, Birthplace of the population, by counties or census division, 1931; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 43, Population by birthplace and sex, for counties or census divisions, 1941.

Table 2.2. Swedish-origin population in Canada and British Columbia, 1921, 1931, and 1941.

| | 1921 | | 1931 | | 1941 | |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Canada | BC | Canada | BC | Canada | BC |
| Total | 61 503 | 9 666 | 81 306 | 16 108 | 85 396 | 17 979 |
| Male | 35 707 | 6 173 | 48 049 | 10 434 | 48 630 | 10 731 |
| Female | 25 796 | 3 493 | 33 257 | 5 674 | 36 766 | 7 248 |

Sources: Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 26, Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin by federal electoral districts, 1921; Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 32 Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin by counties or census divisions, 1931; and Census of Canada, Vol.2, Table 1, Population by racial origin and sex, for provinces and territories, 1941.

This significant gender disparity may also account for a high degree of remigration among Swedish men compared to that of their female compatriots.⁵² The 1921 census records nearly twice as many males as females among Swedish-born residents (Table 2.1). This was clearly noticeable in British Columbia, where, in 1921, 72.8 percent of the Swedish born population was male.⁵³ The number of Swedish born in B.C. expanded in the 1920s, but the sharp decline among the Swedish males in the 1941 census suggests that the Depression hit them hard, and that many returned to Sweden or went to the United States. Certainly, after Swedish immigration to Canada came to an abrupt halt in the early 1930s, remigration to Sweden exceeded out-migration to

⁵² Norman and Runblom, *Transatlantic Connections*, 88, and Runblom and Norman, *From Sweden to America*, 128.

⁵³ Table 2.2. As a comparison, Table 2.3 shows that while the Swedish-origin population also was disproportionately male, 36.1 percent were female.

Canada.⁵⁴ Although *three* times as many Swedish men as women emigrated to Canada, Table 2.3 shows that men were more than *ten* times more likely to return home.⁵⁵ As Chapter 7 indicates, Swedish women found it easier to marry than did their male compatriots, and women's occupations in personal service were less affected by economic fluctuation than were the male-dominated resource industries. That so many more married men than married women remigrated suggests that labour migration was a family driven economic strategy, where men sometimes emigrated alone, sacrificing years away from their families in order to save money to improve their lives in Sweden; this phenomenon, however, does not explain the much higher number of single male returnees.⁵⁶ Swedish men might have been tempted to return to Sweden both for sexual and economic reasons, while Swedish women's chances in these areas likely improved in British Columbia.

⁵⁴ Runblom and Norman, *From Sweden to America*, 129.

⁵⁵ One study suggests that sons at times emigrated to raise money for a farm or to free family holdings from debt. Thus, at times it was a family driven economic strategy. See Hans Norman and Harald Runblom, *Amerika emigrationen i källornas belysning*, (Gävle, 1980): 185.

⁵⁶ Lars-Göran Tedebrand notes that 74 percent of the married men in one Swedish sawmill district emigrated and returned from North America without their families. *Västernorrland och Nordamerika 1875-1913. Utvandring och återinvandring [Västernorrland and North America 1875-1913. Emigration and re-migration]* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1972), 223-24.

Table 2.3: Remigration to Sweden from Canada by men, women, and children, 1916-1950.

| Year | Children | Adult single | | Married | | Total |
|-----------|----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| | | Under 15 | Males | Females | Males | |
| 1916-1920 | 59 | 150 | 24 | 59 | 39 | 331 |
| 1921-1930 | 175 | 1 063 | 104 | 366 | 131 | 1 839 |
| 1931-1935 | 225 | 1 310 | 77 | 341 | 192 | 2 145 |
| 1936-1940 | 139 | 339 | 43 | 119 | 102 | 742 |
| 1941-1945 | 3 | 28 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 44 |
| 1946-1950 | 47 | 193 | 52 | 92 | 73 | 457 |

Source: Historisk Statistik för Sverige, Vol. 1, "Befolkningen 1720-1950, Tab. B 30 (Stockholm, Statistiska Centralbyrån, 1955).

While the numbers of Swedes in British Columbia might seem insignificant, they were nevertheless a notable ethnic group. At least fifteen immigrant groups lived in British Columbia in 1921, but those of British-origin clearly dominated. Despite the relatively small number of Swedes in British Columbia, together with other Scandinavians they belonged to the fourth largest identifiable group after British, Chinese, and native Indian.⁵⁷ In 1921, some census calculations grouped Scandinavians together, perhaps reflecting difficulties of outsiders in distinguishing between individual Scandinavian nationalities, in particular Norwegians and Swedes. B.C.'s total population at this time was 524 582, and of those, 19 002 — 3.6 percent — were Scandinavian. In 1931, their position in B.C. was slightly stronger. Although constituting only 4.8 percent of the total population, by this time Scandinavians belonged to the third largest ethnic

⁵⁷ See Appendix 4.

group, surpassed only by those of British and Asian origin.⁵⁸ The number of Scandinavians in British Columbia may seem insignificant when viewed in relation to the total population, but because most other national groups were even smaller, they became noticeable particularly in some occupations where they were over-represented.

Swedish immigrants in British Columbia found themselves in a demographic, industrial, and political structure and development that was a world apart from Sweden. B.C.'s status as a relatively recently settled province, heavily reliant on resource industries, affected its political, demographic, and economic development. At B.C.'s entry into Confederation in 1871, the white population viewed British Columbia as "a British outpost on the edge of an American frontier."⁵⁹ Until the 1880s, the bulk of the population and the workforce were First Nations people. When white workers started to arrive and assume dominance in the labour market, this new workforce was overwhelmingly male in nature, which carried demographic consequences. Hugh Johnston notes that British Columbia had a higher percentage of foreign born, a higher ratio of men versus women, and a greater number of the population between the ages of fifteen and forty-five than any other Canadian province. Women became more noticeable in the workforce after 1900, but only in traditional female occupations, such as domestic service, elementary school teaching, office work and retail sales. Still, the female ratio in

⁵⁸ If, however, Chinese and Japanese were seen separately, Scandinavians would have been the second largest identifiable ethnic group in British Columbia. In 1931, the Chinese population was 27 139 and the Japanese 22 205. Census of Canada, Vol 2, Table 31, Population classified according to sex and racial origin by provinces, 1931

⁵⁹ Hugh Johnston, "Native People, Settlers and Sojourners, 1871-1916," in The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia ed. Hugh J. M. Johnston (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 177.

paid labour was only half that of Toronto.⁶⁰ Clearly, for the first part of the twentieth century, B.C. was an overwhelmingly male, working-class environment.

The strength of the working class, however, did not result in many votes for left-wing political parties in British Columbia. Although Socialists were very active in the early twentieth century, they never won more than three seats in any one provincial election between 1907 and 1924, when Socialist parties temporarily disappeared from the political scene.⁶¹ Despite that, most adult men – and after 1917, women – were entitled to the vote, Socialism never posed a serious challenge to the traditional parties, and B.C.’s reputation as a radical province was perhaps more apparent than real. This is particularly curious because of British Columbia’s overwhelmingly male and youthful working class. John Douglas Belshaw notes that, “democracy [had] a peculiar character in British Columbia. More of the adult population could vote because a greater share was male ... [and] more of the voters were young males in their prime working years.”⁶² Craig Heron shows how the Canadian working class generally tended to place its trust in labour candidates within the Liberal party, and how “Labourist craftworkers ... developed a deep distrust and dislike for socialists and their doctrine.”⁶³ This also held true for British Columbia. The appearance of the social democratic Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the 1933 provincial election posed the first real challenge to the right, but when the Liberal and Conservatives rallied to form a Coalition government in 1941 they

⁶⁰ Hugh Johnston notes that between 1881 and 1911, “there were about 2.3 white men in British Columbia for every white woman.” Johnston, “Native People, Settlers and Sojourners”, 165, 168 and 181-182.

⁶¹ The Socialist Party of Canada won three seats in the 1907 election. See Electoral History of British Columbia, 1878 – 1986, http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/13ge1912-1.html.

⁶² John Douglas Belshaw, “Provincial Politics, 1871-1916,” in *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia* ed. Hugh J. M. Johnston (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 151.

⁶³ Craig Heron, “Labourism and the Canadian Working Class,” *Labour/Le Travail* 13 (Spring 1984): 48-52.

successfully disarmed the threat from the left. Thus, the political parties that stood on the right of centre dominated the political scene in B.C. for most of the twentieth century.

The types of employment offered in British Columbia, such as railway work, mining, logging and fishing were well suited for the Swedish immigrants, many of whom arrived with few formal skills. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was one of the largest employers in the first quarter of the century. Together with the smaller Canadian National Railway (CNR), the CPR employed 8,500 men in 1926.⁶⁴ Chapter 3 will discuss a particular Swedish group of immigrants who were part of that workforce. The CPR was also heavily involved in the B.C. mining industry, particularly in the interior of the province. The mining industry, however, was unstable and vulnerable to short-lived speculation. While gold and silver mining either declined or only marginally increased, copper, lead, and zinc were core products after 1900. During its height in the pre-First World War era, coal mining produced half of the mining employment opportunities, and continued to be an important source of work in the 1920s, but eventually alternative heat sources made coal a less attractive choice for consumers.⁶⁵ Logging was another important source of work for new immigrants. After 1914, the forest industry rivalled the CPR as the biggest employer, and Allen Seager notes that the “forest sector would be the engine that lifted British Columbia’s overall economy out of the post-war doldrums.”⁶⁶ Swedish immigrants also worked in fishing and agriculture. The highly competitive B.C. fishing industry centered round the salmon, and its canning industry hired mostly First Nation and Asian workers. While agriculture “ranked second only to forestry in measured

⁶⁴ Allen Seager, “The Resource Economy, 1871-1921,” in *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia* ed. Hugh J. M. Johnston (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 208.

⁶⁵ Seager, “The Resource Economy, 1871-1921,” 212-216.

⁶⁶ Seager, “The Resource Economy, 1871-1921,” 220.

output,” the more successful aspect of this industry was fruit farming in the Okanagan Valley.⁶⁷

Table 2.4: Gainfully employed Scandinavian and Others, Male and Female, in British Columbia, 1931.

| Occupation | Total all nationalities | | Scandinavian | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| All Occupations | 262,515 | 43,748 | 16,552 | 1,751 |
| Agriculture | 42,209 | 1,429 | 2,680 | 57 |
| Fishing, Hunting, Trapping | 9,409 | 47 | 1,308 | 19 |
| Logging | 12,929 | 0 | 3,147 | 0 |
| Mining | 10,339 | 3 | 1,029 | 1 |
| Manufacturing | 26,568 | 2,804 | 1,230 | 78 |
| Electric Power | 4,793 | 0 | 233 | 0 |
| Building and Construction | 19,010 | 1 | 1,407 | 0 |
| Transportation and Communication | 26,277 | 1,890 | 1,169 | 48 |
| Warehousing | 2,460 | 464 | 64 | 19 |
| Trade | 22,201 | 4,727 | 357 | 107 |
| Finance, Insurance | 3,680 | 83 | 51 | 2 |
| Service | 31,224 | 23,348 | 704 | 1,255 |
| Clerical | 9,613 | 8,885 | 134 | 174 |
| Other | 41,732 | 308 | 3,038 | 10 |

Source: Census of Canada, Vol.7, Table 49, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada and the provinces, 1931.

Scandinavian immigrants clearly clustered in the labour intensive industries described in the above paragraph. While Scandinavians were employed in all occupational sectors, they were over-represented in certain occupations (Table 2.4). Male Scandinavians made up 6.3 percent of the total male workforce, and they were overrepresented in logging, fishing, mining, construction, and evenly represented in agriculture.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Scandinavian men were slightly underrepresented in electric power, manufacturing and transportation. They were much underrepresented in all other trades, such as warehousing, service, trade, finance or clerical where the male

⁶⁷ Seager, “The Resource Economy, 1871-1921,” 228-229.

⁶⁸ Of all workers, Scandinavians constituted 24.3 percent in Logging, 13.9 percent in Fishing, 9.9 percent in Mining, 7.4 percent in Building and Construction, 7.3 percent in Other, and they were evenly represented of the total workforce in Agriculture (6.3 percent)

Scandinavian participation ranged from 2.6 percent to 1.3 percent. Scandinavian women made up 4 percent of the total female workforce in British Columbia but were underrepresented in most occupations except for the service industry.⁶⁹ As the following chapters will show, many Swedish immigrants found themselves in occupations of which they had no previous experience, and for the majority of men and women the move across the ocean was part of a proletarianization process that transformed them from small farmers to workers.

In conclusion, Swedish immigration to British Columbia took place during a time of political and economic change in Swedish history, and it stopped abruptly when the Great Depression decimated jobs in occupations where Swedes had traditionally found a niche. This coincided with a period in Swedish history that seemed to offer new political and economic power to the labour movement, thereby reducing the impetus for leaving. It would be a mistake, however, to overemphasize the radical impact of the Swedish labour movement on immigrants in Canada. It was strategically savvy and benefited from the cooperation between the Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democratic party. Still, important sections of the working class, such as farm workers and loggers – both prominent groups in the Swedish immigration to British Columbia, shied away from union involvement. Likewise, the political arm suffered from internal divisions and spotty electoral support until external political and economic events propelled the SDLP into power in 1933, at a time when Swedish emigration had come to an abrupt halt.

⁶⁹ The glaring exceptions are fishing and mining; however, the numbers are too small to be conclusive.

Chapter 3: From Whence They Came: The Farming Community of Långasjö, Sweden

Between 1850 and 1935, over 1 400 individuals emigrated from Långasjö, a small agricultural parish in southeastern Sweden. While most moved to the United States, 331 settled in British Columbia between 1882 and 1935. Thanks to a local collection of life stories in Sweden, it is possible to follow the immigrants in British Columbia through changes of employment and marital status, and for some, emigration to the U.S. or remigration to Sweden. The controlled background of the emigrant cohort thus presents a unique opportunity to examine how cultural background influenced the decisions of immigrants regarding their occupations in the receiving countries. This study takes advantage of research in both Canadian and Swedish archives, and seeks to contribute to the history of immigration by examining its effects on both the sending and receiving country. It includes a unique “twin” study that compares immigrants with an equivalent group who never left Sweden. It also examines the extent to which the Swedish background guided immigrants’ lives, and how the emigration of so many parishioners altered circumstances for those who stayed in Sweden. The Swedish part of the enquiry draws on Church book registers that systematically recorded occupation and conjugal changes.

This chapter will begin by examining the internal stratification of the sending society. It will show that even seemingly homogenous societies had internal differences that affected immigrants' decisions in the receiving country. In addition, by studying the life course of subjects in the home parish that are comparable to the emigrants in age, gender and social and occupational background, the chapter seeks to answer two questions. First, how did emigration change the life for the individuals who chose not to leave their home parish? The rate of emigration from Långasjö was high even by Swedish standards, and with so many of the younger generation leaving, it is likely that it created an equal measure of burdens and opportunities for those left behind. Second, to what extent did emigration change the life and opportunities of the emigrant? As seen in Chapter Two, Sweden changed from a mostly rural to an urban world where industrial or service oriented occupations took over from the traditional trades and agriculture, but Långasjö remained largely agricultural, unlike the industrial structure that met immigrants in British Columbia. This chapter suggests that younger sons and daughters of farming families gained from the out-migration of their peers, while the children of labourers and crofters remained relatively unaffected. Those who stood to lose most from the exodus from Långasjö were not, as in many other parts of Sweden, the employers, but the older generation that depended on the economic support of children to stave off poverty when declining health prevented waged work.

During the period of investigation, Långasjö parish was not particularly prosperous, but neither was it steeped in poverty. Most farms were small to middling, and many farmers needed additional income to support the family. Långasjö was then and still is an agricultural district, approximately ten by twenty kilometres in length. In 1930,

1 778 individuals lived in thirty-seven villages that together contained 280 farms of varying sizes. Between 1853 and 1930, Långasjö also had 4 poor houses, 10 grain mills, 54 common crofts, 22 soldier crofts, and 255 smaller dwellings such as landless houses and *backstugor* (small cabins for the poorest of day labourers), besides numerous dower homes where aged parents lived out their lives as a new generation took over the farm.¹ Although nearly fifty percent of the Långasjö area is covered with forests, forested land had little commercial value prior to the First World War, and farmers only cut enough trees to support local construction projects, build furniture, and provide fuel.² All farms contained a mixture of arable land and forests and were barely sufficient to support a family; only one, Grimsgöl manor, was sizeable enough for commercial production. The slow advance of agriculture in terms of mechanical and other techniques reflects generations of tight economic circumstances.³ Agriculture dominated the economy to the extent that the only industries were small carpenter shops or sawmills, each of which had only a handful of employees. The first industry, a sawmill started in 1903 by a return emigrant, grew slowly over the century. Today it is a major employer and lumber producer.⁴ Through most of the period, however, trades that catered to the rural population were the best alternatives to agricultural work.

¹ John Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar. En bok om emigrationen till Amerika från Långasjö socken i Kronobergs län*, [*A Parish in Småland emigrates. A book on the emigration to America from Långasjö parish in Kronoberg county*] (Växjö, Sweden, 1967), 781. The number of farms is from 1930, while the other figures are calculated on existing dwellings between 1853 and 1930.

² Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 775.

³ Farmers commonly used oxen rather than horses long into the twentieth century. The first tractor was introduced in the 1940s, but up to the 1960s, most farmers still used horses for hauling and fieldwork. Långasjö Hembygdsgrupp, *Gård och by i Långasjö socken*, [*Farm and village in Långasjö*] Second edition. (Emmaboda, Sweden, 1978), 194-95. Even in the 1930s, rather than growing hay, some farmers reaped wild meadows and collecting foliage from young deciduous trees, which they dried and stored for winter feed for the cattle. Eric Elqvist, *Långasjö. Försök till en sockenbeskrivning*, (Långasjö, Sweden, 1938), 88-89.

⁴ *Gård och by i Långasjö*, 426-429.

This description seems to imply a thoroughly homogenous population, but there were nuances that had economic consequences for the Långasjö people. Social differences were particularly great between the landed and the landless, but there were also disparities among farmers. In many parts of Sweden farmers commonly leased or rented land from large landholders, but in Långasjö most farmers were independent landholders. In cases where they rented land, the farm was usually of a moderate size, where the registered owner was for some reason unable or unwilling to work the farm.⁵ In Locknevi, another Småland parish, much similar to Långasjö in social composition, physical geography, and employment opportunities, Christer Persson argues that a Marxist class differentiation makes very little sense in these settings. Although farmers sold excess products, farms were rarely commercial enterprises, and only hired help if the children were too young or too few to shoulder some of the labour. That some farms provided a comfortable living did not necessarily catapult them into an agrarian “bourgeoisie.” The step down to a proletarian level was short even for the landed. If not needed on the family farm, older children commonly worked as hands or maids for neighbours who did not have children able to work; thus the border between employee and employer was fluid. This does not imply that the countryside was a haven of equality. Farms differed in size from those that comfortably supported a family and both male and female hired help, to modest holdings that only subsidized other waged labour.

⁵ In one case, the son inherited the farm in 1914 at the time of his father’s death, worked it until 1920, when for unknown reasons he left the district and rented the farm out between 1920 and 1947, when the ownership was transferred to the third generation, also a son who took possession of the farm. See Church Books, Långasjö, 1917 to 1936, and 1937 to 1948.

Christer Persson defines social categories as “stratums,” a form of social ranking among non-commercialized agriculturalists.⁶ This study follows a similar ranking by dividing farm owners into groups from large, moderate, and small holdings according to the Swedish land measure in *mantal*.⁷

Not all residents in the Långasjö parish were free-holding farmers, and there were social differentiations even among the landless. Some, such as crofters (*torpare*) skirt the border between the small farmer and the landless. The common crofts were situated on private farmland, and large enough to provide grazing and hay to feed a couple of cows, although others were the size of small farms.⁸ A crofter generally had a good-sized potato field and could even grow some crops, such as barley or rye. Up to the 1910s, few crofters owned the land, but paid rent and worked a contracted number of days for the farmer on whose land the croft was situated. Crofters’ children had the right to retain the contracts, and thus common crofts were often passed down to the next generation.

⁶ Christer Persson, Jorden, Bonden och hans familj. En studie av bondejordbruket i en socken i norra Småland under 1800-talet, med särskild hänsyn till jordägande, sysselsättning och familje- och hushållsbildning, [*Land, Farmers and Families. A study of a peasant farming in one parish in northern Småland during the 19th century, with special reference to land ownership, employment, and the forming of family and households.*] (Stockholm, 1992), 95-98. See also Christer Winberg, Folkökning och proletarisering. Kring den sociala strukturovandlingen på Sveriges landsbygd under den agrara revolutionen [*Population Growth and Proletarianization. The transformation of Social Structures in Rural Sweden during the Agrarian Revolution*], (Göteborg, Sweden, 1975), 44-58.

The term “stratum” is my translation of Persson’s Swedish term, “*skikt*.” Note that all translations from Swedish-language texts in this dissertation are my own.

⁷ For a detailed explanation of the *mantal* system, see Appendix 2.

⁸ Nils Wohlin, Emigrationsutredningen Bilaga VII. Utvandarnes uppgifter [*Appendix VII. The Emigrants’ own stories.*] (1909), 44.

Sverige

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One such contract from 1906 in Virestad, Kronoberg county,⁹ offered the crofter grazing land for two cows, two hayfields of unspecified size,¹⁰ and the right to collect firewood and wild berries for his own use but not for resale. In return, the crofter paid the farmer one hundred Swedish *kronor* and four days of labour each year, and was required to “observe an orderly, respectable, sober and polite manner.”¹¹ Other contracts were more demanding in terms of labour. One agreement from 1909 stipulated two male shifts per week, and sixty-two female shifts over the course of a year.¹² Thus, contracts varied in amount of work expected by the crofter and his family, as did the amount of land attached to each croft, although it scarcely was enough to feed a large family. As historian Kalle Bäck notes, with the help of added income from day labour a crofter and his family could carve out a secure, if humble living even on these small areas.¹³ The farmer who owned the land benefited both from the rent and the promised labour. Moreover, since crofts were often situated on marginal land that was difficult to use effectively, the farmers lost little on the trade.¹⁴ During the enclosure period in the mid-nineteenth century, however, farms were reorganized so that land that was previously inaccessible and therefore allotted as croft land was now useful to the farm owner. That decreased the numbers of crofts. The crofts had offered a meagre living at best, but Bäck

⁹ This contract from 1906 is relatively late, and earlier contracts stipulated more dayshifts from the crofter. In the early nineteenth century crofters commonly promised to do up to thirty dayshifts per year. Mats Hellspong and Orvar Löfgren, *Land och stad. Svenska samhällen och livsformer från medeltid till nutid*, [Countryside and city. Swedish societies and life from the Middle Ages to contemporary times.] (Malmö: Gleerup, 1994), 76.

¹⁰ The size of the arable land differs between crofts, but according to historian Kalle Bäck, the smallest *torp* owned two acres of land. See Kalle Bäck, “Laga skifte och torpbegyggelse i Östergötland 1827-65,” [Enclosure and crofts in Östergötland 1827-65] *Historisk tidskrift* No 3 (1988): 323

¹¹ Virestads Hembygdforening, *Torp och backstugor i Virestad* (1978), 9.

¹² Wohlin, *Emigrationsutredningen*, 44.

¹³ Kalle Bäck, *Början till slutet. Laga skiftet och torpbegyggelsen i Östergötland 1827-65* (Borensberg, Sweden: Noteria 1992), 12.

¹⁴ Bäck, “Laga skifte och torpbegyggelse i Östergötland,” 327.

suggests that increased emigration by crofters' children after the enclosure system indicates that they had once countered outward migration.¹⁵

While the soldier croft was comparable in size to the common croft, it differed in regards to contracts and inheritance rights. Soldier crofts emerged in the late seventeenth century as a way for the government to ensure an available peacetime army.¹⁶ Until the beginning of the twentieth century when universal military training replaced the traditional soldier, Sweden was divided into numerous small military districts (*rotar*), on which farmers of the *rot* were responsible to help maintain a soldier and his family. Enlisted men were allotted new names that had some deeper significance, often intended to reflect the individual soldier's personality.¹⁷ In return for attending annual training camps, soldiers received a small salary, the right to reside in a croft, and an annual measure of meat and grain provided by the *rot* farmers. A regulation soldier's croft had a baking oven and a stove, and measured eight meters in length, five meters in width, and two meters to the ceiling.¹⁸ In addition, it retained a small amount of land that provided enough hay for a cow and a yearly crop of potatoes for the family. But the soldier's family could not inherit the croft in the event of his death, and neither could he remain should he become incapacitated due to illness or accident.¹⁹ Thus, while provisions from

¹⁵ Bäck, "Laga skifte och torpbegyggelse i Östergötland," 338. Since the emigration of all groups to Canada took place long after enclosure had changed the situation for crofters in Långasjö, it is impossible to determine if crofters emigrated for other reasons than what was the case for sons of farm owners.

¹⁶ Hellspong and Löfgren, *Land och stad*, 75.

¹⁷ Examples of soldier names among Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia are Fridh (peace), Värn (guard), Lilja (lilly), or composite names such as Blomqvist (flower branch) or Holmström (islet stream).

¹⁸ Vilhelm Moberg (1898-1973), the Swedish author of the books *The Emigrants*, which later Jan Troell made into a film featuring Liv Ullman and Max Von Sydow, was born in a soldier croft a few minutes drive from the Långasjö parish. Moberg's novel, *Raskens. En soldatfamiljs historia*, [*Raskens. The history of soldier family*.] (1927) provides a historically accurate if fictional description of the life of a soldier and his family.

¹⁹ In *Raskens*, when the soldier died accidentally the family was not recompensed for the significant improvement done to the croft and adherent land during their twenty years as crofters. Instead, the mother and her youngest children were doomed to a life of poverty.

farmers promised survival, soldiers lacked the long-term security that was available to common crofters. Despite these conditions, soldiers often raised families of ten children or more and provided a trained peacetime army at very little cost to the Swedish government.²⁰ By in the 1910s, both soldiers and common crofts were being phased out. Common crofts were increasingly either bought and legally owned by the inhabitants, who then were not responsible to perform any day shifts to the farmer, or were torn down and added to the main farmland. Likewise, in the early 1900s, Sweden changed from having paid soldiers to universal conscription. While croft soldiers already in the system could remain on their crofts until retirement, new ones were not hired. Thus, crofters' children born after 1900 faced different conditions than did their parents.

A third group of interest are tradesmen, such as millers, carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers and tailors. Many tradesmen lived either in crofts or in landless houses, although some also ran small farms. Most villages also had their own miller, carpenter, blacksmith and tailor. The carpenters seemed to have been the most persistent group, developing trades such as furniture making, or building the many wooden farmhouses that were common in the area. The stonecutter, who cut the rectangular blocks needed for the stone foundations on wooden buildings, was also an important tradesman. While stonecutting was not considered skilled on par with traditional trades, the vocation gave rise to personal pride as seen in Church books when the occupational entries occasionally changed from stonecutter to master stonecutter.²¹ New technology, however, meant that

²⁰ For example, Karl Erik Hugo Lilja, born 1900, was one of sixteen children raised in a soldier's croft. Karl Lilja later worked as a foreman for CPR in Canal Flats and Grindrod, B.C. See Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 535.

²¹ Church Records, Långasjö socken, 1917-35. *Gård och by i Långasjö* notes that stonecutters were important in the building industry since the house foundation of rock cut in large rectangular shapes decided the quality of the house construction. *Gård och by i Långasjö*, 187.

some old trades disappeared. One example is the village cobbler who became a casualty of modernity in the nineteenth century when factory-made shoes started to appear on the market,²² although members of this trade persisted into the twentieth century in Långasjö parish.

A final group to consider are farmhands and maids, an occupation that most youth tried before they either became farm owners or settled in waged occupation. Sweden had two main groups of agricultural workers. The permanent proletarian farm workers (*statare*) emerged in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They were most often married and the whole family worked for large commercial estates, in particular dairy farms, and were paid both in cash and with such benefits as free housing.²³ Because of the agricultural structure in Långasjö, only one estate hired *statare*, and even larger farms seldom hired more than one or two farmhands, often only a maid.²⁴ Farmhands and maids in Långasjö were most often young and single, and for the majority working on a farm was a stage in the life cycle, part of growing up, rather than a permanent occupation. Largely because of their versatility, women dominated in the servant category both in cities and on the countryside. Women were able to do a wide range of both indoor and outdoor work on the farms and expected a much lower wage than did men. Farmhands, on the other hand, were never employed indoors, and often demanded extra “perks” on

²² Ulla Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara. Ägobyten av egendom i Kumla socken 1780-1880*, [*Heavenly land and trade commodity. Ownership transfers of land in Kumla parish 1780-1880.*](Lund, 1994), 104-5.

²³ Lars-Arne Norborg, *Sveriges historia under 1800- och 1900-talen. Svensk samhällsutveckling 1809-1992*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993), 48-49. While Swedish employers attempted to hire this type of worker from Eastern Europe, this was not always successful, although they recruited seasonal workers, in particular women. Lars Olsson also documents how Swedish employees, at times aided by the Swedish government, used Second World War refugees as agricultural labour. See Lars Olsson, *On the threshold of the People's home of Sweden: a labor perspective of Baltic refugees and relieved Polish concentration camp prisoners in Sweden at the end of World War II*, (New York, N.Y.: Center for Migration Studies, 1997).

²⁴ *Gård och by*, 251-61.

top of their wages.²⁵ Both sexes were normally hired on a yearly contract basis, and received pay in food, lodging, a set of clothing or material with which to make clothes, plus a small cash wage. Paternalism guided the relationship between the farmer and his help, and the Servants Act (*tjänstehjónsstadgan*) regarding wages and treatment of servants strengthened this relationship.²⁶

Some authors insist that while a social gulf between the farm family and the servants was common, in a parish such as Långasjö where farmers' children commonly worked periods on neighbouring farms during their teenage years,²⁷ class differences were less noticeable.²⁸ John Johansson notes that Långasjö's social composition was remarkably homogenous with very few members seeing themselves as belonging to a higher rank.²⁹ The church pew system, he claims, enforced this egalitarianism since everyone living on one farm – including the help and the crofters – had a right to sit in the same pew, and each year the pews rotated so that those at the back of the church moved to the front.³⁰ There were social differences between crofters and farmers, and

²⁵ At the most, good female farm servants were paid half the salary of male farmhands. On some farms, male farmhands also had a right to throw a Christmas feast for their friends at the cost of the farmer, a bonus that female servants did not enjoy. Hellspång and Löfgren, *Land och stad*, 81.

²⁶ Before 1926, the servant act (*tjänstehjónsstadgan*) permitted employers to punish underage servants through physical means. After 1926 servants were regulated together with other employees even regarding terms of employment. Hellspång and Löfgren, *Land och stad*, 81.

²⁷ Among the men reporting to have worked as farmhands on farms other than that of their parents, seven were from farms ¼ of a mantal or larger, and nine were from the average sized farm of 1/8 to ¼ mantal. Information gathered in Database "Långasjö", held by the author and by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

²⁸ In her lament over modernity, local artist and writer Elisabeth Bergstrand-Boulsen complains that "the dirtiest of all dirty words, a word so horrible that [she] hardly could write it down – 'class hatred' was never heard spoken [in Långasjö]. Elisabeth Bergstrand-Boulsen, *Värendskvinnor i bilder och ord*, (1932), 18.

²⁹ Johansson bases his observation of the rank system on titles provided in the Church Records. Thus, a man of a higher rank was given the title *Herr* (Sir), while a woman of status was titled *Fru* (Madam). Through the years these titles have lost their exclusiveness, and are now commonly used to address married couples.

³⁰ Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 37.

between farmers of different sized farms, but in the church, at least ostensibly, they were all created equal.

The increasing number of small farmers and crofters, and the limited range of occupations, forced the unemployed to seek work elsewhere in Sweden or abroad, sometimes for shorter periods but often on a permanent basis. Generally, Swedish labour migration stems from the middle ages, and while it was always affected by economic downturns, industrialization and a population increase after the mid-nineteenth century lent it a greater urgency.³¹ The *Skåne* beet fields in southern Sweden drew both men and women as did highly industrialized areas such as Stockholm, but the mines and railways in northern Sweden only offered employment for men. Germany and Denmark also enticed Swedish workers, although the labour migration to the two countries had different patterns. Southern and central Germany often attracted Swedish craftsmen and skilled workers, while unskilled labour and Swedish milkmaids sought out the large farms in Denmark and northern Germany.³² The local migration to Germany focused on Slesvig-Holstein and reached its heights in the 1860s, although it still occurred sporadically in the early twentieth century. The stream towards Denmark was more persistent and resulted in a higher degree of permanent migration. Women dominated emigration to Denmark, since they were valuable both as servants in Copenhagen and workers on the beet fields.

Långasjö youths followed a similar migration pattern. Johansson suggests that most labour migrants from Långasjö worked in agriculture, particularly in the nearby

³¹ For the general history on European labour migration, see Jan Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe 1600-1900: The Drift to the North Sea* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), and Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe Since 1650* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

³² Hellspång and Löfgren, *Land och stad*, 304-10. Swedish historian Lars Olsson also points to a clear political pattern in labour migration. Olsson argues that the competition for agrarian labour between European countries was an underlying cause of the First World War. Lars Olsson, "Labor Migration as a Prelude to World War I," *International Migration Review* 116.30 (Winter 1996): 875-900.

Blekinge, a province that also offered urban employment in the city of Karlskrona. The building of the Swedish railway network in the nineteenth century also tempted many young men, particularly those from small farms or crofts. Despite this high degree of movement from Långasjö, the parish population continued to increase until the mid-1850s, when Långasjö workers turned to North America as the new receiving country.³³ This out migration was higher than ever, and combined with a decrease in births, the parish population started to decline, which may have changed conditions for those who stayed behind (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Långasjö population, 1850-1930

| | | |
|------|---|-------|
| 1850 | - | 2 058 |
| 1880 | - | 2 718 |
| 1900 | - | 2 409 |
| 1930 | - | 1 778 |

Source: Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 19.

The Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia thus came from different social groups and carried with them different expectations and prospects, which guided their occupational decisions in British Columbia. This chapter contrasts the life course of Långasjö residents who remained in Sweden with their peers who left for British Columbia. The study of Långasjö youth is inspired by a “twin study” performed by Jan Ekberg, Professor of Economy at Växjö University, Sweden. Ekberg was interested in comparing the social mobility in Sweden of immigrants and the Swedish-born individuals of identical age and occupation. He was testing B.R. Chiswick’s conclusions that labour immigrants in the United States are positively selected, and therefore have “a higher capacity and motivation for work than the non-immigrants and the native population in

³³ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 18-26.

the immigrant country.”³⁴ In testing Chiswick’s findings, Jan Ekberg looked at 400 000 individuals, and compared immigrants in Sweden from four different European countries³⁵ to Swedish “twins” who, at the onset of the study, were of the same age, sex, occupation and geographical residence.³⁶ Ekberg then used the Swedish Census from 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990 to follow both the immigrant and the “twin” in order to determine “the occupational career and income trends” in either group.³⁷

Ekberg’s method of comparing immigrant twins with native-born counterparts does not work as well for a comparison between Långasjö immigrants and native-born British Columbians. The most evident obstacle is privacy regulations that block this kind of “twin” research after the Canadian census of 1901. The necessary data for comparing Swedish immigrants with native-born Canadians is not available. Moreover, the rate of continuing migration among Långasjö immigrants in B.C., either to the United States or back to Sweden was high, which together with the relatively low number of subjects adds to the difficulty in transferring Ekberg’s twin study to Swedish immigration in Canada. It is more useful to adapt the method to compare those who left Långasjö with those who stayed.

This study is therefore highly modified and greatly limited in scope from Ekberg’s survey but it can throw a light on how emigration changed the life for the emigrants and how it affected the community they left behind. To do so, it compares

³⁴ B.R. Chiswick, “The Effect of Americanization on the Earnings of Foreign-born Men,” *Journal of Political Economy* 86. 5 (1978): 897-921; and Jan Ekberg, “Economic progress of immigrants in Sweden from 1970 to 1990: a longitudinal study,” *Scandinavian Journal of Social Welfare* 3 (1994): 148.

³⁵ Ekberg used immigrants from Finland, Yugoslavia, Western Europe, and Czechoslovakia. Ekberg, “Economic progress of immigrants in Sweden,” 150; and Jan Ekberg, “Immigrants – Their Economic and Social Mobility, In *Generating Equality in the Welfare State. The Swedish Experience*, I. Persson, ed. (Oslo, 1990).

³⁶ Ekberg, “Economic progress,” 150.

³⁷ Ekberg, “Economic progress”.

emigrants with men and women who corresponded in birth years and social backgrounds with the emigrants. The term “twin” therefore does not refer to a biological sibling but is a metaphor for a Långasjö resident who was of the same age and social status as a particular emigrant. This enables a deeper understanding of the emigrants, and provides a platform on which to examine how emigration affected Långasjö residents who stayed behind.

Thus, the “twin” approach mirrored the social structure of the emigrant cohort so that comparative Långasjö subjects from the relevant social groups were selected in all the emigrating eras, and the intention was to find a “twin” for each person who left Långasjö for British Columbia.³⁸ This non-biological “twin” was to be a person whose birth year differed no more than five years from that of the emigrant. For each crofter’s son who emigrated, the study tried to find a contemporary son of a crofter who stayed in the parish in order to follow him through his life course. In a different example, if the emigrant was from a farm of 1/8 *mantal* and born in 1895, the comparable subject also must be from a 1/8 *mantal* farm, and could not be born before 1890 or after 1900. It soon became evident, however, that the mobility of Långasjö residents was too high, the population base too low, and the task too time consuming to be able to follow the intent to the letter. The comparable subject could at some point have left the parish for work in other parts of Sweden or Denmark, but could not at any point have been to North America. A “twin” should have lived out his or her life in Långasjö, but since this proved impractical for highly mobile groups, I retained subjects who remained in Långasjö to a

³⁸ This was accomplished. The birth years for the Långasjö comparative subjects range from 1841 to 1914 while birth years for the emigrants range from 1843 to 1912.

mature age, and who stayed in Sweden, even if they eventually left the parish.³⁹

Nevertheless, two hundred and seventy-nine subjects were initially located, matched with emigrants and followed over several ledgers only to discover that seventy-six were unsuited, most often because they had left the district prior to establishing an occupational pattern. Considering the very high mobility among non-landholders, an added complication was the attempt to duplicate the social groups among the emigrants. Thus, while the emigrant cohort consisted of 292 men and 39 women, the comparative “twin” study only matched the occupation and civil status of a total of 203 individuals: 173 men and 29 women (Table 3.2). While “twins” were found among all the major social groups who emigrated from the parish, the comparative study is slightly high on the side of landholding families, simply because of their availability and stronger persistence in the parish.

Each subject was located through the Långasjö Church records, in particular the ledgers between 1890 and 1978, making it possible to follow subjects throughout their lifetime.⁴⁰ For example, “Nils Petter Nilsson”, the first-born son in a family registered as “indigent,” moved with his parents and seven siblings from croft to croft within the parish before settling permanently in 1911. During his teenage years, “Nils” worked as a “catcher” in a nearby glass factory, before being hired as a farmhand between 1914 and 1916. Lars Olsson argues that despite laws prohibiting child labour, underpaid and

³⁹ The “twins” were born between 1849 and 1915 while the emigrants were born between 1854 and 1912. Since most of the “twins” lived long into the twentieth century, utmost care has been taken to prevent identification of these individuals. Names of twins are therefore aliases and the villages of residency have not been revealed.

⁴⁰ While most Swedish Church Books have been collected for archival storage and are only available to researchers in microfilmed format, the Långasjö Books are still in the possession of Långasjö Lutheran Church, and held in a fireproof vault in the parsonage. A warm Thank You to Reverend Lars Petersson of Långasjö Church, who generously allowed me to take over his private office in order to work on the ledgers. For Church records prior to 1896, I used microfilmed copies held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

overworked children under the age of twelve worked in the Småland glass factories into the first decades of the twentieth century. As “Nils” and other Långasjö “twins” indicate, the stint as child worker rarely developed into a trade, in particularly for poor crofters’ children.⁴¹ Later, Nils became a stonecutter, and in 1936 he was setting rock foundations for new housing, a vocation that was regarded as unskilled, despite its importance for the quality of the finished house. Through all these years, Nils resided in the family croft, which a younger brother had bought in 1932. In 1941, however, Nils was able to buy his own house in a nearby village, where a third brother joined him in 1943, a sister in 1951, and a younger brother in 1973. Nils and his siblings were single and childless, and they remained together until Nils’ death in 1977. The story of Nils’ other siblings was similar. A younger brother who made his living as a stonecutter bought the family croft in 1932, which he shared with a sister who had worked most of her life as a farm maid, and a brother who had worked as a blacksmith briefly before working in a nearby glass factory. All seven siblings exemplify how difficult it was for the lowest stratum in this agricultural society to break the circle of poverty. It also indicates the power of family, how sisters and brothers could join forces and combine their resources into two households in order to live in relative security. It is difficult to surmise why none in this family emigrated, but it could be that they did not have kin in North America who could send a prepaid ticket home.

⁴¹ Only the glass master’s children were taught the trade, other child workers were typically let go at the age of fifteen. Lars Olsson, *Då barn var lönsamma*, 2d ed (Malmö, Sweden: Team Offset, 1995), 89-92, 115 and 139. For a similar argument of child workers in a French glass factory, see Joan Wallach Scott, *The Glassworkers of Carmaux: French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974). For a good fictional account of the abuse, but also of the pride of being a wage worker, experienced by a soldier’s son working as a glass catcher, see Wilhelm Moberg, *Soldat med brutet gevär* [*Soldier with a broken gun*], (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1944; reprint, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1998), 53-89.

Stonecutter “Albin Karlsson’s” family is another illustrative example. Albin and his wife had seven children between 1887 and 1900, of whom all but one reached adulthood. The records reveal that the oldest daughter, “Emilia”, worked as a farm maid in Plaggebo village in 1901 and 1902, before she and a younger sister moved out of the parish to the nearby Algutsboda in 1904. The first-born son, “Karl Oskar”, was a labourer who married at age twenty-four and soon became the father of a son. A few years’ later, however, “Karl Oskar” moved his small family to a nearby rural community, never again to reside in Långasjö. The second son, “Olof”, had intended to emigrate to North America in 1913, but died that year at the age of nineteen. A third daughter, “Anna”, however, sailed away to the New World at the tender age of seventeen. “Lars,” the next in line, was another labourer who married young, at age twenty-two. His son was born in 1920, and following his older brother’s example, Lars moved his family out of the parish before the son had celebrated his first birthday. Finally, the remaining son emigrated to North America three days before Christmas, 1923. This family, then, saw all of its children leave the parish, a pattern that was more common than not. Clearly, the Church records are surprisingly detailed, and while it is time consuming and awkward to follow each subject from book to book, the structure of the records and the priests’ familiarity with the parishioners allow historians to reach a good understanding of the life and occupational history of its residents.

As the above examples indicate, the Church records give insight in how social stratification affected whole families that were locked in classes where upward mobility was exceedingly difficult if not impossible. In an overview article of ethnological and historical agrarian studies, Orvar Lövgren calls for a stronger historical perspective and a

greater sensitivity to internal stratification in agricultural communities. He claims that scholars have tended to create pictures of “ideal traditional peasant societies,” thus often ignoring or misinterpreting internal strains and class differences. Until recently, ethnologists saw the latter half of the nineteenth century as a “golden age”, missing that it was also a “period of growing class conflicts in the peasant community [and that] conflicts often were concealed in a patriarchal structure.”⁴²

This comparative “twin” study tries to avoid those pitfalls by looking at men and women from different agrarian groups in Långasjö, and by contrasting their occupational and social development with that of their contemporaries who emigrated. Doing so, it will support Löfgren’s argument that even peasant societies were socially stratified, although this brief study did not uncover any overt signs of class struggle. It suggests that widespread emigration did not merely affect those leaving, but that it also had both positive and negative consequences for those who remained in the parish. Social security for the elderly depended on the ability of children to care for aging parents, and those who saw all the children emigrate were left without means other than possible savings or remittances from overseas. For other groups the emigration of so many peers offered opportunities that would otherwise have been improbable. Many emigrants from farming families were first-born sons who under normal circumstances would have been expected to take over the family farm. The departure of first-born sons gave younger sons and surprisingly many daughters a chance to work the family farm.

⁴² Orvar Löfgren, “Historical Perspectives on Scandinavian Peasantries,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9 (1980), 205.

Table 3.2: Non-emigrant Långasjö men and women in Sweden, based on parent occupation.

| | Men: 173 | Women:29 | Total: 203 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Farm owner total</i> | 109 | 17 | 123 |
| GROUP 1: Farm 1/2 mantal or larger | 26 | 4 | 30 |
| Group 2: Farm 1/8 to 1/4 mantal | 72 | 10 | 82 |
| Group 3 Farm less than 1/8 | 11 | 3 | 14 |
| <i>Crofter:</i> | 20 | 4 | 24 |
| <i>Tradesman total:</i> | 14 | 4 | 18 |
| Blacksmith: | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Cobbler: | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Miller: | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Carpenter: | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Tailor: | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| <i>Labourer total:</i> | 20 | 2 | 22 |
| Basket maker | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Labourer: | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| Railway worker | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Single mother | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Indigent | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| <i>Soldier:</i> | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| N/A | 1 | 0 | 1 |

When looking at first occupation for the men in all groups, it becomes clear that the parental background was very significant for the future occupations of sons who remained in Sweden but was not true for Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia. The tendency of sons to continue the father's occupation was evident among tradesmen. Tradesmen's sons who never left the parish could look forward to working in similar vocations as their fathers. Table 3.3 shows that the blacksmiths' sons worked in the metal industry, the millers' sons as miller apprentices, and the tailors' children became tailors. In particular for the tailors, several siblings in one family often picked up the craft, the girls as seamstresses and the boys as tailors. This indicates that tradesmen actively trained their children in their particular trade, either to use them as extra workers or as a conscious effort to educate them for a future livelihood. This strategy was not totally

altruistic. In her study on poverty in Locknevi parish, Christina Gerger points out that in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, parents depended on their children's ability to earn a livelihood and to support them in their old age. Sweden had an old-age pension in place in 1913, but it was inadequate even for minimal survival. This did not pose such a great problem among farm families where parents could negotiate with their children for room and board after retiring from farming. The landless, however, relied on their physical prowess, and had little of value to hand down to their children except for a lifetime of knowledge in their particular trade. Gerger concludes, "Those who were not taken care of by their children ran a great risk of becoming indigent when they became too old for work."⁴³

When looking at the history of whole families rather than individuals, the importance of out-migration becomes even more apparent. In 1907, Nils Wohlin interviewed emigrants as they were leaving Sweden in order to get first-hand information on reasons for leaving. One of the interviewees was a relatively prosperous crofter from Kronoberg's county in Småland whose four cows and pigs, together with the crofter's extra income as a carpenter, allowed for a modest, but secure living. The croft agreement stipulated dayshifts by both the crofter and his wife, which during the first several years commenced at 4:00 A.M. and ended at 9:00 P.M. during the summer season. In time, their sons and daughters performed this work, which freed the parents to work and develop their own land. As the children matured, however, they emigrated to North America one by one, leaving the crofter in the position of having to hire day workers, at least in order

⁴³ Christina Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst. En studie av fattigdom och fattigvård i en smålandsk landsbygdssocken åren 1815-1835* [*Where the need was the greatest. A study of poverty and assistance in a Småland parish the years 1815-1835*. [sic. Misprint on book cover, should be 1835-1915] (Stockholm, 1992), 101.

to cover the stipulated maid work. The situation for this couple grew increasingly onerous as they aged and became unable to perform the promised work, and, because of decreasing income, unable to afford to hire outside help to cover the day shifts.

Eventually they sold their property and used the money to join their children overseas.⁴⁴

In this case, emigration did not open promising new doors for those left behind, but by making life more difficult, eventually persuaded an older couple to leave their home in order to enjoy the protection and company of their children.

Table 3.3: First occupation of Långasjö male “twins” by parental occupation (tradesmen only).

| | Total | Blacksmith | Carpenter | Cobbler | Miller | Tailor |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| First occupation | 14 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Carpenter | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cobbler apprentice | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Blacksmith | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sheet Metal Worker | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tailor apprentice | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Miller apprentice | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Crofter | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stone cutter | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway worker | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Soldier | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Farm owner | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

While the pattern of occupational inheritance is somewhat less strong among workers and crofters, it is evident that their children found upward mobility difficult (Table 3.4). Some of the crofters’ sons become owners of farms, most often by marrying a farmer’s daughter. This, however, occurred to a much lesser degree than with farmers’ sons. Three of the other non-farmers’ sons were listed as farm owners in their first occupation, and only three more men managed to become farm owner through their life cycle. Moreover, unless acquired through marriage, these farms tended to be very small.

⁴⁴ Wohlin, *Emigrationsutredningen*, Bilaga VII (Stockholm, 1909), 44.

The sole labourer who became farm owner did so by marrying a woman whose parental farm had been in the family's possession for at least three generations, and was eventually handed down to her own son. It is questionable if the young couple would have been able to take over the farm had it not been for the fact that there were no sons left to inherit since all three brothers had emigrated to North America.⁴⁵ Emigration from Långasjö parish thus benefited couples who otherwise stood little chance of becoming owners of prosperous farms.

In another case the farm was gained through laborious work that involved many small upward moves, but this farm does not seem to have been coveted by other farmers, which likely made it affordable if perhaps challenging to run profitably. Jonas Staffansson became a crofter in the 1860s, and gave the contract to his son Sven August Jonasson in 1893 when Sven was 32 years old and newly wed.⁴⁶ The small property could not support Sven's growing family, so he subsidised his income with carpentry work. Since the tradition of croft labour became obsolete in the early twentieth century,⁴⁷ it is possible that Sven owned it outright in 1906, which would have given him at least some of the money needed to buy a 1/8 mantal in Trollemåla. The farm was unusual in having been in the possession of many different families, each farming it for only a few years before moving on.⁴⁸ This history suggests difficulties attached to the property,

⁴⁵ Gård och by i Långasjö, 391 and Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 174-5.

⁴⁶ Gård och by i Långasjö, 383.

⁴⁷ Nils Wohlin claims that the process by which crofters bought the land outright commenced in the first decade of the twentieth century. Wohlin welcomed this development since he considered it a means of retaining agricultural workers in Sweden who otherwise might emigrate to North America. Nils Wohlin, Emigrationsutredningen. Bilaga XI. Torpare-, Backstugu- och inhysesklasserna, (Stockholm, 1908), 98-105.

⁴⁸ Note that Ulla Rosén argues that the idea of the family farm being handed down father to son, generation after generation, is largely a myth. If looking at farm ownership from a longer perspective, few families transferred ownership from father to son over more than three generations. Rosén, Himlajord och

which in turn possibly lowered the price, putting it within reach of a crofter who had four sons and four daughters to help with backbreaking labour.⁴⁹ Sven, however, persisted, and the farm eventually went to his son, Karl Aldo Svensson, who had worked in British Columbia between 1924 and 1928.⁵⁰ Thus, the crofter became farm owner, and was able to hand down the farm to the next generation.

Table 3.4: First occupation of Långasjö male “twins” by parental occupation (Single Mother, Indigent, Crofter, Soldier and Labourer)

| | Total | Single mother/Indigent | Crofter | Soldier | Labourer |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| <i>Occupation Långasjö</i> | 51 | 10 | 20 | 8 | 13 |
| Carpenter | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Cobbler apprentice | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Farmhand | 12 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Home son | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Farm owner | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Farm renting | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Crofter | 7 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Glass working | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Soldier | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Wagon maker | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Labourer | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Stone cutter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

The majority of non-landed sons, however, stayed in low-paying jobs, or took over small crofts thus perpetuating subsistence living, generation to generation. Ulla Rosén notes that with the emergence of factory produced shoes, the village cobbler disappeared. In Kumla parish, in western Sweden, the height of village shoemaking was in the 1870s, but as shoe factories appeared in the early twentieth century, the number of

handelsvara, 285. The “twin” sample, however, does not attempt a long-term study and can only note that the short-term pattern in Långasjö was generational ownership transfer within the family.

⁴⁹ Between 1841 and 1906, the farm had ten different owners, each using it for an average of 6.5 years. See *Gård och By i Långasjö*, 448.

⁵⁰ Three of Sven Jonasson’s sons emigrated to Canada. They all came back and two became farm owners while one worked as a construction worker in Växjö. Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 450, 493 and 503.

cobblers decreased.⁵¹ Among labourers in this study, however, some children trained as cobblers long into the twentieth century.⁵² Christina Gerger notes that tradesmen rarely became indigents with the exception of practitioners of vanishing crafts, such as tailors and cobblers.⁵³ For the children of the landless, therefore, the emigration of siblings and peers had little impact on their future fortunes. The social boundaries were too rigid to allow an easy occupational upward ride. The rate of emigration among children of poor families increased during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,⁵⁴ but this did not bring about any positive changes among poor families that remained in Långasjö. Many families saw all of their children leave the parish, often to become permanent residents abroad, in Denmark or in North America.⁵⁵ For these parents, children's emigration would have been doubly difficult, containing both the grief of parting and the increased probability of an old age spent in destitution. Despite an ethnic homogeneity and an agricultural dominance, beneath the surface Långasjö was a stratified society where the step down to proletarianism was shorter than the climb to property ownership. Even in the mid-twentieth century, children inherited the social and economic status of the parents. Farmers' children tended to become farmers, sons of tradesmen picked up the same or similar trades as their fathers, and landless children tended to be trapped in lower end occupations.

⁵¹ Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 104-5.

⁵² Oskar Fredrik Fredrikson was listed as cobbler when he left Långasjö in 1948, and "Nils Nilsson", registered as master cobbler in 1948. Moreover, "Nils'" brother also was a cobbler, and Nils' son worked the same trade until 1954.

⁵³ Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 116-17.

⁵⁴ Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 53.

⁵⁵ For example, the ex-soldier Frans August Almberg (1863-1920) had seventeen children with two different wives. Six of the children died at a young age, three emigrated to Canada, and eight moved away from the parish to settle elsewhere in Sweden. None stayed in Långasjö.

Sons of farmers were better situated, and most continued the family tradition, either on the childhood farm or elsewhere. In all, fifty-six farm sons registered farm owning as their first occupation (Table 3.5). Later in their life cycles this figure increased, since it was customary for farm sons to work a few years as farmhands, or even to leave the parish temporarily while waiting to inherit.⁵⁶ Thus, in time, fifteen more farm sons became independent farm owners, bringing the percentage of sons of farmers in this study that followed in their fathers' footsteps up to sixty-five percent. Naturally, not all sons could inherit the farm, but even those who chose other career paths were unlikely to have very low-income occupations, or vocations that were becoming obsolete in an increasingly modern society, such as a professional soldier, crofter, cobbler, or tailor. Instead, since farmers generally had better economic resources to allow their children to pursue higher education, it is among the farm sons that we find the teachers, the storeowners and the forest keeper. Thus, for those who remained in Långasjö, social background played a significant role.

⁵⁶ This study refers to children inheriting the farms. This does not imply that the other children in the family were left without any compensation. When one child inherits the farm he or she is legally required to pay the siblings their share of the inheritance in cash. Many successors had to borrow from the bank to release their brothers and sisters, which put a strain on the farm economy; however, studies indicate that it was those who were bought out who risked proletarianization. Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 37-45, and 69-70.

Table 3.5: First occupation of Långasjö male “twins.” Based on parent occupation (farm owners only).

| <i>First occupation</i> | Total | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Total Groups 1-3</i> | 109 | 26 | 72 | 11 |
| Carpenter | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Farmhand | 19 | 1 | 13 | 5 |
| Home son | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| Farm owner | 56 | 15 | 38 | 3 |
| Farm renting | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Crofter | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Forest keeper | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Teacher | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Student | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Labourer | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Store clerk | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Store owner | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |

Groups 1 (1/2 *mantal* or larger), Group 2 (1/8 to 1/4 *mantal*), and Group 3 (less than 1/8 *mantal*)

Ulla Rosén notes that *inter vivos transfer*⁵⁷ was the favoured method of transferring farm ownership from one generation to the next. According to studies in England, Finland and certain parts of Sweden, farmers commonly retired around the age of sixty.⁵⁸ The timing of intra-generational farm ownership transfer was clearly important both to the emigrants and those who stayed behind. Christina Gerger and Christer Persson suggest that increased emigration led to an aging population on the farms in Locknevi parish. Persson believes that “it is likely that many of Locknevi farmers’ children were emigrants, and that the aging farming population was a result of difficulties in recruiting new, young persons who wanted to and had the opportunity to take over the farm.”⁵⁹ This may be, but the high number of first-born sons who left Långasjö suggests that the reverse might be closer to the truth. In a classic study on the causes of emigration, Nils Wohlin argues that the Swedish tradition of providing room and board for the retiring

⁵⁷ Acquiring title when the parent is still living.

⁵⁸ Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 67. According to Magnus Perlestam, in Ramkvilla parish in Småland, the average age the husband gave up the farm was fifty-eight. Perlestam, *Den rotfaste bonden*, 221.

⁵⁹ Persson, *Jorden, bonden och hans familj*, 210-211, and Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 53.

generation could become economically and psychologically tiring when parents gave up the farm many years too soon. Nonetheless, Wohlin suggested that the reverse condition, when parents refused to give up control, caused much greater inter-generational bitterness. By delaying ownership transfer, the farmer not only risked arousing the ire of the would-be inheritor, but also stood the chance of seeing his children emigrating one by one, until none was left to take over the reins.⁶⁰

Fifty Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia were first-born sons of farmers; ten of them came from farms larger than ¼ mantal. Fourteen of the first-born sons returned to Sweden, and of those only three took over the family farm, while four married and farmed land inherited by their wives, three bought farms that were unconnected to family, and four of the first-born returnees never farmed at all after returning to Sweden. In comparison, of twenty-three first-born “twins” who never emigrated, thirteen took over the family farm, and fifteen farmed either with their parents, their inlaws, or by purchasing a new farm. Similarly, Christer Persson shows the most common development in Locknevi was that first-born sons took over the farm, except when the oldest son had died or moved out of the district.⁶¹ This, however, is not the pattern among the emigrants. First-born sons who emigrated were less likely to become farm owners, in particular on the parents’ farm, than were first-born sons who never emigrated.

What then convinced first-born sons to leave? Some emigrants might simply have wanted to break the generational cycle of family farming. Generally, however, the emigration of the oldest son seems to have been connected to the age of the father, since

⁶⁰ Nils Wohlin, *Bondeklassens undergräfvande. Emigrationsutredningen bilaga X, [The undermining of the farmer classes. The commission on emigration appendix X]* (Stockholm, 1911), 39. See also Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 67.

⁶¹ Persson, *Jorden, bonden och hans familj*, 270.

the younger the father was the year the son emigrated, the longer the oldest son had to wait before assuming control of the farm. The average age of the son the year he emigrated was twenty-one, while the corresponding age of the father was fifty-two years. For first-born sons in the “twin” study, the average age of gaining title was thirty-three, and the average age of fathers was seventy-one. In one case the father was eighty-one years old and the son was fifty before that presumably longed-for transfer occurred. It is impossible to learn from the Church ledgers why this father waited so long to give up control, but records show that most of the son’s life was spent on the farm, and that he remained single even after acquiring title. In a different case the father seemed more willing to compromise, perhaps to prevent the son from emigrating. On the son’s marriage, the father, age fifty-three, subdivided the $\frac{1}{4}$ mantal property into two parts, father and son each farming $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mantal. They continued to co-farm independently for eight more years until the son was registered as full owner. While the motive for this family is unclear, Nils Wohlin suggested that the possibility of emigration often put the power of land transfer in the children’s rather than the father’s hands. In order to keep the children in Sweden, parents retired before they were physically incapable of performing the work.⁶² This, however, rarely occurred in Långasjö, where parents normally were over seventy years old before giving up control. The timing of the *inter vivos transfer*, therefore, might have affected the decision of first-born sons to emigrate, a decision from which the younger siblings stood to benefit, since they had fewer years to wait between reaching adulthood and parental retirement. Clearly there was a high degree of mobility in the parish, and when first-born sons left, either to try their luck elsewhere

⁶² Wohlin, Bondeklassens undergräfvande, 42.

in Sweden or North America, it opened up opportunities for other children who may not otherwise have become farmers.

Male emigration offered inheritance opportunities for sisters who stayed behind. Swedish historians note that it was “common sense” for sons to inherit the farm, and then preferably the first-born son.⁶³ The number of daughters in the Långasjö district who together with their husband took over the family farm is therefore noteworthy. Daughters took possession of ten of the family farms. One was the legal co-owner together with unwed siblings, but the other women were married, and their older brothers had emigrated to North America. In some families all brothers had emigrated, although at times the sister profited when an older brother who otherwise might have inherited had already bought out his wife’s family farm. “Emma Johansdotter,” for instance, was the second youngest in a family of six children growing up on a small 1/16 mantal farm. One brother went to the United States, one to Canada, a sister followed shortly after, while a third brother moved to Blekinge. When “Emma” married at age twenty-one, her father was sixty-five years old. Thus, when the oldest son had emigrated in 1910 at the age of twenty-three, five children under the age of nineteen still lived at home. Had the first-born son lingered until the father surrendered ownership, he would have waited fifteen long years.⁶⁴ Emigration was an option that had much precedence in the parish, and thus was a natural means for restless sons to gain new experiences while waiting to inherit.

⁶³ Persson, *Jorden, bonden och hans familj*, 270. Ulla Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 68-69, and Perlestam, *Den rotfaste bonden*, 204.

⁶⁴ In this case, emigration was not a panacea for “Emma’s” brothers. Her oldest brothers died young, one from typhoid fever the other from the Spanish flu, diseases that they contracted in British Columbia. The third brother eventually became a foreman for a construction company in Vancouver, but he remained single all his life. The sister, however, married a conductor for the CPR, a trade that Shelton Stromquist describes as the “labor aristocrats” among railway workers. See Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 411, 438-39, and 496; and Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 106-109.

Considering that only fourteen of the fifty first-born sons who emigrated returned home, it gave daughters a chance that was rarely offered to women in areas with low emigration.⁶⁵

“Emma’s” farm was small which might have rendered it less attractive to her brothers, but together with their husbands, women also took possession of large farms. When “Hulda Nilsson” married, she had said farewell to two brothers who emigrated to Canada, and had seen a third brother marry and take over his in-laws’ farm. Hulda was thirty-nine and her father was seventy-four when he finally surrendered ownership of the ¼ mantal farm to her and her husband at the time of their marriage in 1942. It is very likely that in this case, too, her older brothers emigrated rather than waited; the oldest brother who left in 1914 would have had to wait twenty-eight years for the right to farm the land. These are random cases, and the total number of female inheritances due to male emigration in Långasjö is unknown; still, it shows that farm daughters inherited land that would have gone to sons, had they not left for North America.

Social background was also important in determining women’s lives. A large percentage of farm daughters married farmers-to-be without reporting any previous occupation, not even as maids on farms other than those of their parents. This might simply mean that the priest neglected to record what was considered normal training for a future farm wife,⁶⁶ but it might also reflect that the farm labour of teenage daughters was too valuable for them to hire out. Orvar Lövgren suggests that as a result of the increased

⁶⁵ Ulla Rosén’s study of Kumla parish in western Sweden show a much lower rate of emigration than in Långasjö. Only one of her subjects emigrated, and women or sons-in-laws only inherited under special circumstances. Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 71.

⁶⁶ Gerger notes that the time when girls and boys worked as farmhands only lasted for a few years, and was seen as a part of the life cycle rather than as a social position. Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 57. For a comparison with rural women in nineteenth century Ontario, see Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada 1790-1840* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

proletarianization servants were recruited from the landless strata, and that this widened the gap between landless and farmers.⁶⁷ This does not mean that farm daughters hesitated to engage in paid labour, nor that they minded travelling in order to find employment. As Table 3.6 indicates, five farm daughters became labour migrants; two travelled several times over a period of several years, and three were away for less than a year. Neither did the typical female labour migrant come from the smallest farm that might have had the greatest need for additional income. All three daughters from the ¼ mantal farms worked in nearby urban centres prior to inheriting the farm,⁶⁸ and the daughter from a 1/8 mantal farm spent three years in Germany (1905-08) and several more years as maid in different places in Sweden, until disappearing from the district in 1932, forty-five years old and still single. Even so, more than half of the farm daughters in the “twin” sample (fifty-nine percent) lived with their parents when they married farm sons, either to take over his family farm or that of her parents, and only one out of seventeen farm daughters worked as a farm maid during the full period of study.

Table 3.6: First occupation among Långasjö female “twins.” Based on parent occupation, Farm Owner, Groups 1-3

| | Total | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
|---------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| <i>Total</i> | 17 | 4 | 10 | 3 |
| Inherit Parent farm | 7 | 0 | 4 | 3 |
| Other farm | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Labour Migrant | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Maid | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Seamstress | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Marry Tradesman | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

The first occupation among daughters of non-farmers is more uniformly waged-labour oriented than was the case for the landed daughters (Table 3.7). Eleven of twelve

⁶⁷ Löfgren, “Historical Perspectives,” 209.

⁶⁸ Most female labour migrants moved back to Långasjö district to marry farmers, but one daughter who stayed single became part owner of the family farm together with a sister and a brother.

were wageworkers, often working for local farmers, and often for several different employers. There are, however, fewer labour migrants in this group than one might have supposed. Only one woman in this group went outside of Sweden, working both in Germany and Denmark, most likely on larger commercialized farms. It is worth considering that none of the farmers' daughters in Group 3, that is farm sizes that were smaller than 1/8 mantal, travelled outside of the district. Christine Gerger shows that the poor in Locknevi tended to stay in the parish, partly because they lacked travel funds and partly because they were assured assistance within their own parish.⁶⁹ The Church notes do not indicate that these women had reached the point of destitution, but it is possible that they were unable to meet the costs, or simply unwilling to risk the initial financial investment involved with moving outside the parish. As Chapter 4 will illustrate, it was difficult for women to finance emigration to North America, and it seems that money was also scant even for shorter journeys.

Table 3.7: First occupation among Långasjö female “twins.” Based on parent occupation Crofter, Soldier, Labourer and Tradesman

| | Total | Crofter | Soldier | Cobbler | Tailor | Labourer |
|----------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|--------|----------|
| <i>Total</i> | 12 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Other farm | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Labour Migrant | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Maid | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Seamstress | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

On the whole and despite social differences, women from all groups had very similar occupational experiences during their youth. There were few alternatives for women who wanted or needed to work, and single women from all social groups competed for the same positions. The social stratification, however, becomes more polarized in the final occupation for women in the Långasjö cohort. Nearly all farm

⁶⁹ Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 103.

daughters in this sample either married farmers or were a part owner of the family farm (Table 3.8). In comparison, women from non-farming families were more likely to remain in the proletariat stratum, although three eventually married a farmer.

Table 3.8: Final occupation and marital status among Långasjö female “twins.” Based on parent occupation, Farm Owner, Groups 1-3

| | Total | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total | 17 | 4 | 10 | 3 |
| Inherit Parent farm | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Other farm | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Co-own farm with siblings | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Maid | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Marry Tradesman | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Marital Status | 17 | 4 | 10 | 3 |
| Single & Childless | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Single Unwed Mother | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Married with child prior to marriage | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Married with no child prior marriage | 13 | 2 | 9 | 2 |

A woman’s adult social standing therefore depended on her husband and the occupational limitations for women left little room for an independent economic existence outside of marriage. In an article on aging widows and single women in turn-of-the-century Sweden, Ulla Rosén argues that Swedish women’s independent means to upward mobility was as bleak in 1900 as they had been in 1800. Society expected women to live under male protection and made no allowances for those who stepped or were pushed outside the boundaries. Unless a woman was independently wealthy through inheritance, only widowhood gave her financial and personal autonomy, and then only if her husband had been a property owner. If the property was a farm, her autonomy

was contingent on her children being old enough to work.⁷⁰ This is true as well of the Långasjö “twin” sample. Regardless of coming from landed or landless families, single women standing outside male protection lived under strenuous circumstances, most often working as maids, or, as in a few cases, as croft owners, which, without the added male income likely offered a shaky economic foundation.⁷¹ Thus, social background was important for women’s future marriages since it was much more common for farmers’ daughters to marry farmers than it was for non-farmers’ daughters. However, for women who chose not to marry, or were unable to find a suitable mate, the economic future was quite similar regardless of social stratum, which is reminiscent of the women’s teenage occupational experiences.

The precarious economic position of proletarian women is illustrated by their conjugal and parental status. Christina Gerger notes that women dominated in the indigent group, and that most of them were single parents.⁷² Single mothers were uniformly shunned in the Swedish peasant society, and considered “whores” simply for having a child out of wedlock. The consequence of such indiscretion, Jonas Frykman claims, was a lifetime of economic hardship.⁷³ Ann-Sofie Kälvemmark, however, cautions against simplifying single women’s experiences by lumping them together and disregarding their social origin. She argues that historical studies of single mothers must take into account social status. Kälvemmark notes that farmers’ daughters had a greater economic value, and that prospective husbands considered possible inheritance of land or

⁷⁰ Ulla Rosén, “Åldrande änkor och ogifta kvinnor. Landsbygskvinnors strategier inför ålderdomen runt sekelskiftet 1900,” [*Aging widows and unwed women. Rural women’s strategies toward aging around 1900*] *Universitet 2000* (Växjö, Sweden: Växjö universitet, 2000), 104-113.

⁷¹ Together with a sister and an older brother, one single woman in the “twin” sample became the legal co-owner of the family farm. Considering the unlikelihood that she would have been registered as owner on her own standing, the brother thus assumed the role of a husband.

⁷² Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 103

⁷³ Jonas Frykman, *Horan i bondesamhället* [*The whore in the peasant society*] (Stockholm, 1977).

other economic benefits. For the landless, marriages played a lesser role and many simply lacked the economic prospects that permitted wedlock.⁷⁴

Farms depended on women for certain types of work especially in the growing dairy industry. Because of the gendered division in farm work, women were responsible for the dairy, and, as the task of preparing the milk became increasingly profitable, farmwomen gained a stronger economic position in the household.⁷⁵ Technological advances gradually turned milking into a male task, but the rigid gender division in Swedish farming, combined with a rising demand for male labour in other economic sectors kept it in female hands long into the twentieth century.⁷⁶ This was particularly true in a district such as Långasjö, where technological advances were slow to take root. The first milking machine in Långasjö appeared in 1941, but they were not commonplace until the late 1950s.⁷⁷ Milking by hand required training and competence, but cultural aspects made it less than palatable for men. As Lars Olsson notes, milking by hand had sexual connotations. The teat was associated with the penis, and jargon for hand milking borrowed from expressions denoting male masturbation. Men who tackled female tasks risked being seen as feminized at the best of times - add the extra barrier of strong homosexual connotations and milking became unthinkable. Since men were either never taught how or refused to learn how to milk, they required help from other females in the

⁷⁴ Ann-Sofie Källemark, "Hotet mot familjen. Den ogifta modern i Sverige i historiskt perspektiv," [*The threat against the family. A historical perspective of the unwed mother in Sweden*] *Historisk Tidskrift* (1978): 83-101.

⁷⁵ Magnus Perlestam, however, warns that although women's work became more profitable on the farm, it did not necessarily follow that they gained any real power. Women still rarely inherited farms, and even widows did not gain any political power. Magnus Perlestam, *Den rotfaste bonden - myt eller verklighet?: brukaransvar i Ramkvilla socken 1620-1820*, (Lund, 1998), 20/22.

⁷⁶ Lennart Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia. Tillväxt och omvandling under två sekel*, (Stockholm: SNS, 2000), 199. Orvar Löfgren notes that Swedish men were culturally restricted from women's work, but women were quite able to cross gender borders without losing their femininity. Orvar Löfgren, "Kvinnfolksgöra – om arbetsdelning i bondesamhället," [*Women's work – about labour divisions in the farming society*] *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 3.3 (1982): 6-14.

⁷⁷ *Gård och by i Långasjö*, 470.

neighbourhood if the wife or daughters became ill or incapacitated.⁷⁸ Clearly, even if she did not stand to inherit land and buildings, a farmers' daughter could bring expertise, cash, and a good social standing to her marriage. Unmarried mothers or not, it made economic sense that farmers' daughters were socially accepted and single motherhood was not a severe handicap as long as her indiscretion was a one-time occurrence.

The social and economic repercussions for single mothers whose parents were crofters, soldiers or labourers were more severe. Women from the landless group could offer little financial incentive to marriage, and not surprisingly, all four of these single "twin" mothers stayed single, while the two farm daughters with children out of wedlock eventually married (Table 3.8 and 2.9). Disadvantaged women also tended to have more children out of wedlock than was the case for farmer's daughters. Three of the four single mothers from the crofter and labour families had three children or more. The Church books also indicate that they found the grip of poverty hard to break. Two daughters were eventually listed as croft owners, one in 1915 the other in 1945, but they probably also performed waged labour to eke out their income. The daughter of a labourer remained a maid while the soldier's daughter eventually was listed as indigent. Thus, there is little to indicate that women from the lower strata in Långasjö parish were able to benefit from the large out migration from the district, and few of these women could finance either permanent or labour migration.

⁷⁸ Lars Olsson, "Den vita piskan. Om mjölkningens könsarbetsfördelning under den agrara kapitalismen," [*The white whip. Of gendered labour divisions during the agrarian capitalism*] in *Dagsverken. 13 essäer i arbetets historia*, ed Alf O Johansson, Susanne Lundin and Lars Olsson (Lund, 1994), 47-60. For a similar discussion on how technology helped men to take over the dairy production, see Anna Lindberg, "Mejerskan som försvann," [*The disappearing female diarist*] in *Arbetets Historia. Tema: Kvinnors arbete och könsrelationer i arbetet*, ed Lars Olsson and Christer Hult (Lund, 1993), 61-78.

Table 3.9: Final occupation and marital status among Långasjö female “twins.” Based on parent occupation Crofter, Soldier, Labourer and Tradesman

| | Total | Crofter | Soldier | Cobbler | Tailor | Labourer |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Total</i> | 12 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Inherit Parent farm | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other farm | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Crofter | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Maid | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Labour migrant | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indigent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Marry | | | | | | |
| Tradesman/Farmer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Left Långasjö | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marry Farmhand | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Marital Status | 12 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Single & Childless | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Single Unwed Mother | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Married with child prior to marriage | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Married with no child prior to marriage | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

Becoming a farm owner offered the greatest amount of security for Långasjö women, but this rarely entailed legal ownership in her name. True, one woman was registered as co-owner of the family farm on ¼ mantal, but both her siblings were also single.⁷⁹ While men occasionally took possession of the farm while still single, women did not. Ownership transfers went from male to male hands. Even in cases when the farm was handed down on the woman’s side, it was invariably legally placed in her husband’s name. Ulla Rosén argues that women were only registered as owners if widowed, and if their children were old enough to take on some of the work. The mother of young children had to remarry or lose the farm,⁸⁰ and Långasjö records show that the farm was

⁷⁹ In all the examples of siblings co-owning farms or crofts, all siblings are single. Thus, the women, in a way that was not true for the men, depended on the marital status of her siblings in order to become farm owners. Together with a sister, this woman shared the farm with a brother who had worked for twenty-four years as a logger in Minnesota, and who returned single in 1912. See Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 198-199.

⁸⁰ Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 44.

then listed in the new husband's name. Both for women and men, marriage was the portal to adulthood and property ownership.⁸¹

Marriage and ownership patterns also suggest that the status of manhood was less connected to age than it was to matrimony and land ownership. Since farms usually changed hands in connection with a son or daughter's wedding, the link between marriage, independence, and male maturity becomes even stronger. As Angus McLaren shows in *The Trials of Masculinity*, the concept of masculinity is constructed, and thus goes through changes as circumstances dictate.⁸² Ella Johansson argues that unmarried men were treated as youngsters regardless of age, and that it was only through marriage that men were accepted as adults on equal terms with married peers.⁸³ Johansson also argues that an inability to marry was the most noticeable result of the population increase and proletarianization process in Sweden, since more men were landless and in unskilled occupations that did not pay enough to provide for a family. The enforced bachelorhood created a crisis in masculinity that manifested itself as an increase in rough working-class culture, the hallmarks of which were rowdiness and drunkenness, behaviour traditionally associated with male youngsters.⁸⁴ McLaren notes a similar reluctance to accept unmarried men as a fully integrated part of society in Europe, and social scientists even

⁸¹ Ulla Rosén notes a sharper class division among farmers in the early 1900s. When farmers became further segregated from the lower classes on the countryside, the conjugal rate declined. Farmers' children lived at home for a longer time, and instead of learning to become farmers by working as farmhands, they tended to enrol in agricultural colleges that were springing up. One consequence of the changed method of training was that more farmers' children remained single. Ulla Rosén, *Gamla plikter och nya krav. En studie om äldreomsorg, egendom och kvinnoyn i det svenska agrarsamhället 1815-1939* (forthcoming 2004).

⁸² Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago, 1997).

⁸³ Ella Johansson, "Beautiful Men, Fine Women and Good Work People: Gender and Skill in Northern Sweden, 1850-1950," *Gender & History* 1.2 (Summer 1989): 200-212.

⁸⁴ Ella Johansson, "Fräcka ynglingar och rejäla karlar. Historiska maskuliniteter och moderna mansidentiteter," [*Insolent youngsters and real men. Historical types of masculinity and modern male identities*] *Nord Nytt* 63 (1996): 94-98.

considered single men as a threat to society.⁸⁵ Certainly matrimony and maturity went hand-in-hand in Långasjö. Five farm sons remained farmhands all their lives in Långasjö, and all stayed single. The small wage earned by farmhands did not permit supporting a family, and for men who refused to move out of the parish the occupational choices outside of agriculture were limited.

As a rule, sons took possession of the farm the same year as they married. Of sixty-four ownership transfers,⁸⁶ forty-four were in connection with marriage and six more men married within a few years after becoming owners. Eight of the comparative subject cases involved a single man who took ownership of the family farm, but then he either co-owned the farm with a sibling, or allowed a single brother or sister to remain in residence.⁸⁷ In most cases of co-ownership, both siblings lived out their lives on the farm single and childless, and if a sister was involved, she was registered as “housekeeper.” In five cases, single men took possession of the farm without the Church records registering any other person as co-habitant. Here the timing of the ownership transfer seems particularly crucial. The youngest of the single farm owners took over the farm at age thirty-eight and the oldest was fifty-four when the father gave up control. There are two possible hypotheses for the high rate of single sons taking over the family farm. One answer is that during the long wait for the father to give up control of the farm the sons might have developed characteristics that made them unsuited for or undesirable on the marriage market. The second explanation is that the parent waited as long as possible for the son to marry, and gave up the farm only when too old to perform the work. Whatever

⁸⁵ McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity*, 55.

⁸⁶ This excludes cases where the date of marriage is uncertain.

⁸⁷ Magnus Perlestam argues that it was rare for either men or women to farm without the support of workers from the opposite sex. Perlestam, *Den rotfaste bonden*, 29.

the explanation may be, the fact that the majority of inter vivos transfers in Långasjö took place in connection to marriage underlines the importance of women's work on the farm.

To conclude the "twin" study, it is equally clear that there were social as well as gender differences in Långasjö parish. Women only followed the parental occupational status to a degree. Wage work for women was limited in scope, and single women from all age groups and social strata competed for the same occupations. In regard to marriages, however, there were clear differences between landed and landless women. Farmers' daughters tended to marry farmers to a much higher degree than non-farmers' daughters. For farm daughters who stood to inherit land or other benefits, not even single motherhood was an obstacle, while single mothers from poorer families were indeed condemned to economic hardship. For women, therefore, economic status was first dependent on the social position of the fathers, and later on that of their husbands.

Emigration from Långasjö affected various social groups to a different degree. For some groups it presented unexpected gifts of opportunities, while others paid fines of social security and the emotional grief of separation. Many parents saw all of their children leave the parish, at times to neighbouring districts or high-employment areas in Sweden or Denmark; many others went to North America.⁸⁸ Here, children's emigration must have been doubly difficult, containing both the grief of parting and the increased probability of an old age spent in destitution. In the first third of the twentieth century such non-landed parents were left without the social security that traditionally was the responsibility of adult children. The rate of emigration among children of poor families

⁸⁸ For example, the ex-soldier Frans August Almberg (1863-1920) had seventeen children with two different wives. Six of the children died at a young age, three emigrated to Canada, and eight moved away from the parish to settle elsewhere in Sweden. None stayed in Långasjö.

increased during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,⁸⁹ but this did not bring about any positive changes among poor families that remained in Långasjö. On the other hand, the high number of first-born sons emigrating from Långasjö changed the traditional inheritance pattern. Some first-born sons might have found the wait too lengthy to endure and rather tried their chances in North America. Others might have planned to use the waiting period to work as a sojourner overseas specifically to gather necessary funds needed to buy out siblings. If the latter was true, emigration was an unsuccessful strategy, since first-born sons who stayed at home had a much better chance at taking possession of the farm than did sons who emigrated. Still, the evidence does not clarify if their departure was due to parental reluctance to give up the farm when the son felt ready to take over, or if parents were forced to continue farming because of the son's departure. Whether the buggy was strapped before the horse or vice versa, the emigration of first-born sons permitted younger sons and a surprising number of daughters to take over the family farm. Thus, despite an ethnic homogeneity and an agricultural dominance, beneath the surface Långasjö was a stratified society where the step down to proletarianism was shorter than the climb to property ownership.

⁸⁹ Gerger, *Där nöden var som störst*, 53.

Chapter 4: From Långasjö to British Columbia

The people of Långasjö were not isolated from a world in which information flowed across oceans and continents. North American immigration agencies advertised through local newspapers, informing readers about everything from the price of a steamship ticket to land and occupational opportunities in North America. Earlier immigrants kept in contact with the home parish, advising prospective emigrants on where to find work and housing and what to expect in the new world. For example, in 1910, twenty-five year-old Elias Alfred Svensson from the village of Enkonaryd in Långasjö parish penned a letter to his good friend Manfred Fransson who had been working for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in British Columbia the past year. Manfred had advanced to the position of a foreman, and hurriedly wrote back to tell Alfred that times were good in B.C. and that pay was between thirty and sixty dollars a month. The parish Church records for 1910 indicate that Alfred lived on his parent's

farm together with three brothers. According to the taxation department, the farm was only half the size considered minimum to support a family, yet in Långasjö parish it was considered average. It took Alfred a year to collect the money he needed for the trip, and on March 12, 1911, he and three friends travelled together to Revelstoke, British Columbia, where Oskar Johansson, a brother of one of Alfred's travel companions found them work on a logging railway under the foreman Oskar Karlsson, an earlier Långasjö emigrant.

In a pattern common among immigrants, Alfred travelled in British Columbia from work site to work site. When his friend Ernst Nilsson wrote about the good wages constructing a hotel at Lake Louise, Alfred quickly packed his bag and subsequently enjoyed a salary of three dollars a day for several months. In the fall of 1912, he did maintenance work on another logging railway, and later that winter found employment at a sawmill in Golden. In the winter and spring of 1913 he worked for a railway in Seviau [?], and after a period of unemployment he helped build a railway close to Athalmer. When that work was over, he tried logging near Golden, but was laid off the same day the First World War broke out. During 1914 and 1915 Alfred found that wages fell, and in the spring of 1916 he returned to Sweden with a savings of 4 000 Swedish *kronor*.

His savings were considerable, but not enough to purchase a large farm. Instead, Alfred moved back to his parental farm, now owned by Alfred's older brother Per Oscar who had taken over the farm after their father's death in 1914. For a few years Alfred worked for the Swedish railway in the nearby town of Emmaboda. Upon his marriage in 1920 to Sigrid Karlsdotter, he and his wife bought a farm at an auction for the sum of 18 000 Swedish *kronor* in the village of Lida, also Långasjö parish. This farm was twice the

size of the family farm, which suggests a considerable improvement in economic position.¹ Here the couple worked and raised three children, and when Alfred retired in 1952, at the age of sixty-eight, he left the running of the farm to his son Arnold Alfredsson.² Alfred's story exemplifies that of many Långasjö youths who left to seek their fortune in North America.

This is the second of two chapters that study the fate of 331 emigrants from Långasjö who immigrated to British Columbia, and it contrasts their social and vocational history with the "twin" cohort in Chapter Two that never left Långasjö parish. Due to the high number of people leaving the province of Småland in the nineteenth century, and aided by Jan Troell's cinematic adaptation of Wilhelm Moberg's novel, The Emigrants, Småland became synonymous with Swedish emigration to North America. Långasjö alone saw 1 414 of its residents leave for North America between 1850 and 1935, the majority to the United States. A unique local history project led by John Johansson has charted their history.³ The information, published in the book En smålandsocken emigrerar, is more or less complete depending on the mobility of the migrant and the time of emigration. Naturally, the further away in the past and the less connected the immigrant was to Swedish communities in North America, the more difficult he or she was to trace. Since emigration to British Columbia was relatively

¹ Alfred Svensson's birth farm was 1/8 *mantal* while the farm he bought was 1/4 *mantal*. See Appendix 2 for an explanation of the term and a description how *mantal* was used to measure taxable farmland.

² John Johansson, En smålandsocken emigrerar. En bok om emigrationen till Amerika från Långasjö socken i Kronobergs län, (Växjö, Sweden, 1967), 423-425.

³ John Johansson started the Emigrant Study Circle in the spring of 1959. The Circle divided the parish between twenty members who collected information about emigrants from their particular sub area. They gathered information from Church records, the Swedish Royal Library archive, the Federal Archive, the Central Bureau of Statistics, Provincial Archives, Police records, and from ship listings of emigrants. Furthermore, the Circle interviewed remaining relatives in Långasjö and also emigrants in North America or their surviving relatives. Finally, the members took a field trip to the United States in order to contact persons, church groups, and institutions that were connected to Swedish immigration in the United States. The Circle also benefited from the advice of Professor Ulf Beijbom, Swedish Institute of Emigration, and Professor Birgitta Odén, Lund University. Johansson, En smålandsocken emigrerar, 11-13.

recent, information on Långasjö immigrants in B.C. is remarkably detailed.⁴ Those who went to B.C. mostly arrived in the first three decades of the twentieth century and tended to gather in railway towns such as Golden, Nelson, or Cranbrook. Therefore the study was able to chart the movements, vocations and marital status on Långasjö immigrants in B.C.

While a search through local British Columbia local histories shows no evidence of these Långasjö immigrants, one must keep in mind that they were spread throughout BC, and were a comparably small group even in a small town such as Golden; thus, local historians would not necessarily be interested in such a specific group of immigrants.⁵ There are, however, other ways of verifying the integrity of the source. A spotcheck through the BC Vital Events' Death Certificates of twenty Långasjö men who according to En smålandssocken emigrerar worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway verifies both marital and occupational status. Of eighteen foremen, the death certificates corresponded marital status with all men, while it listed one man as "CPR employee," one as "Retired", and the eighteen others as either "CPR foreman," "Section foreman," or "Track master."⁶

⁴ A form was filled for each emigrant with the following information; time and place (village) of birth; parents' full names and occupations; number of siblings and if any of these emigrated; emigrant's occupation prior to emigration; date and age of emigration; first and subsequent places of residents in North America and occupation at these residences; year married, number of children and name of spouse; Church membership; associational activities; return to Sweden with subsequent place of residence and occupation on return; and finally the date and place of death. The Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden, holds all original Emigration forms.

⁵ For example, see Kinbasket Country: the Story of Golden and the Columbia Valley, no author (Golden, BC: The Golden & District Historical Society, 1972); Fred J. Smyth, Tales of the Kootenays (Cranbrook, BC: The Courier, 1938); or Phylis Bowman, Road, Rail and River! (Chilliwack, BC: Sunrise Printing, 1981).

⁶ One man was listed as farmer, but this also corresponded with Johansson's findings, since this man had left the CPR for farming. A check of one logger and one miner also corresponds with Johansson's notes. See BC Vital Events, Death Certificates, D#B13579 1977-09-012430; D#B13213 1952-09-008149; D#B13210 1951-09-010913; D#B13249 1960-09-014949; D#B13602 1980-09-003906; D#B13154 1934-503715; D#B13135 40947;7D#B13151 1934-09-491088; D#B13270 1965-09-001341; D#B13156 1936-09-511343; D#B13185 1944-09-652334; D#B13106 1910-09-173816; D#B13284 1967-09-007872; D#B13156 1936-09-511237; D#B13122/1922-09-309277;

In most cases, the informant was either a family member or a friend, and the meticulousness of the entries indicates a deep sense of pride over achieving the status of foreman with the CP Railway.

Långasjö emigration movements to Canada and to the United States differed both in time and in size. The United States was the goal of seventy-five percent of the Långasjö emigrants, most of whom emigrated before 1900. In the 1910s, however, Canada began to entice more than half of the migrant stream, and this trend continued until the end of the migration era in the 1930s. Most travelled directly to British Columbia, joined by many others who had entered through the United States, but who for various reasons had chosen to continue northwest of the border.⁷ Långasjö male immigrants in B.C. tended to work in railway maintenance, particularly for the Canadian Pacific Railway, although employment in mines, construction, and logging was also common. John Johansson notes that the concentration in railways and mines is remarkable since out of 1 400 Långasjö emigrants, “only two [sic] had worked for railways in Sweden, and mining or smelting work was unheard of for all of them.”⁸ This chapter discusses the implications of this occupational concentration, in particular how different social groups used different work strategies, and how that affected issues such as job promotions and remigration.

D#B13116/1919-09-254086; D#B13120/1921-09-293703; D#B13104/1912-09-165851; D#B13583 1978-09-001290; D#B13230 1956-09-013653.

⁷ John Johansson’s estimates that Canada was the destination for 152 persons, but a careful scrutiny of the personal information of each migrant shows that more than double that amount worked in British Columbia at some point. Some arrived in British Columbia from the U.S., while others only worked in British Columbia for a limited time before continuing on to the United States.

⁸ Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 813. Nevertheless, according to individual records, three men from Långasjö had at some point worked for the Swedish railway; two in the Långasjö parish and one (K G F Karlsson) in the province of Härjedalen.

Table 4.1: Emigrant Men - Occupation Prior to Emigration

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|-----------------------|---|----|
| Blacksmith | - | 1 | Tree Planter | - | 1 |
| Blacksmith apprentice | - | 1 | Tailor | - | 2 |
| Bricklayer | - | 1 | Store Owner | - | 1 |
| Building Contractor- | 1 | | Store Clerk | - | 1 |
| Cobbler | - | 1 | Soldier | - | 5 |
| Car Mechanic | - | 2 | Sawmill Worker | - | 3 |
| Carpenter | - | 9 | Sawmill/Logger | - | 1 |
| Child | - | 2 | Sailor | - | 2 |
| Churchyard Work- | 2 | | Stone Cutter | - | 2 |
| Coachman | - | 1 | Rent Farm | - | 1 |
| Crofter's son | - | 2 | Railroad Worker | - | 3 |
| Farm Own | - | 6 | n/a | - | 29 |
| Farmer/Carpenter- | 1 | | Miller (grain) helper | | 3 |
| Farmhand | - | 42 | Labourer | - | 16 |
| Farm Son | - | 142 | Lumber Salesman- | | 1 |
| Glass Worker | - | 4 | Logger | - | 1 |
| Instrument Maker- | 1 | | Painter | - | 1 |
| <i>Total = 292</i> | | | | | |

Table 4.2: Emigrant Women – Occupation Prior to Emigration

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----|
| Farm Owner | - | 1 |
| Farm Wife | - | 1 |
| Farm Daughter | - | 14 |
| Servant | - | 9 |
| Child | - | 3 |
| n/a | - | 12 |
| <i>Total = 40</i> | | |

As seen in Table 4.1, the vast majority of male emigrants – 196 – worked in agriculture, but there were also 30 labourers⁹, 24 tradesmen, 7 soldiers, 4 clerks, 2 children, and 29 men who were not living with their parents but did not specify an occupation. Johansson also cautions that many men who registered as "labourers" were actually farmhands, which puts an even greater emphasis on agriculture. At least for the men, Långasjö society was composed of several different occupational categories despite the agricultural homogeneity, and the occupations among those who emigrated reflect the social composition of the parish.

Since many young men from all categories at some point worked as farmhands, it is not enough to look at the migrant's occupation prior to leaving Långasjö, but one must

⁹ Included are sawmill workers, loggers, stonecutters, railroad workers, general labourers, churchyard workers, and glass workers. Table 4.1.

also consider the occupation and social position of the parents. The agricultural pattern is even more marked among the parents since the majority were either farm owners, or crofters or practiced trades that catered to farmers (Table 4.3). While parental occupation and social standing does not seriously impact Långasjö immigrants' choices in British Columbia, different groups seem nevertheless to have relied on different strategies both when working in B.C. and when returning to Sweden.

The story is slightly different for women. They, too, certainly came from all the available female occupational groups in Långasjö, but these were wholly agricultural and domestic in nature (Table 4.2). There was a great discrepancy in the sex distribution among the migrants, since women barely comprised twelve percent of the total number of Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia. This was low even for Swedish immigrants in general in British Columbia. In 1921, twenty-seven percent of the Swedish-born population was female,¹⁰ which puts the female proportion of the Långasjö migration at less than half of the general Swedish immigration population in B.C. Men and women also exhibited different patterns both in regards to marriage and remigration, and encountered different challenges and opportunities. In Sweden as in B.C., women were discriminated against in terms of employment, wages and autonomy, and men enjoyed a greater range of occupations and were in a better position to travel in search for work. Women had to overcome greater barriers in order to emigrate and had fewer vocational prospects in the receiving country. This chapter will therefore treat men and women differently, starting with a closer look at male emigration from Långasjö to British Columbia.

¹⁰ Census of Canada, Vol 2, Table 52, Birthplace of the total population by sex, for provinces, 1921.

Table 4.3. Parent occupation of 292 men and 40 women: Total 332

| | Men | Women | Total |
|--|-----|-------|-------|
| <i>Farm owner total</i> | 175 | 20 | 194 |
| A: Group 1: Farm $\frac{1}{4}$ mantal or larger | 41 | 3 | 46 |
| B: Group 2: Farm $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ | 99 | 9 | 108 |
| C: Group 3 Farm less than $\frac{1}{8}$ | 27 | 6 | 31 |
| D: Group 4: Farm size not available | 8 | 2 | 9 |
| E: Small land users total: | 50 | 8 | 57 |
| Soldier: | 20 | 3 | 23 |
| Farm renter: | 9 | 1 | 10 |
| Crofter: | 21 | 4 | 24 |
| F: Craftsman total: | 18 | 2 | 20 |
| Bricklayer: | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Cobbler | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Miller | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Tailor: | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| G: Labourer/Indigent total: | 32 | 5 | 37 |
| Farmhand | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Labourer: | 15 | 2 | 17 |
| Churchyard worker | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Paint maker | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Railway worker | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Sawmill worker | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Smelter worker | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Single mother | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| Indigent | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| H: Other total: | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| Merchant | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Glass distributor | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Rural Constable | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| I: N/A total | 13 | 1 | 16 |

Source: John Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*

A total of 292 men from Långasjö ended up in British Columbia, some permanently, while others either carried on to the United States or returned to Sweden. Generally, farm sons exhibited different patterns of behaviour in British Columbia than did sons of non-farmers. Very few in either group ever tried farming in B.C., but those who did were likely to be sons of farmers in Sweden. The majority of Långasjö immigrants from all groups initially worked for railways, most often the Canadian Pacific

Railway. Again there are clear signs that differentiate farmers' sons from non-farming Långasjö immigrants. Farm sons were less open to work for the railway than sons of crofters and workers, and were more likely to leave the railway for other occupations than were sons of non-farm owners. Railways employed sixty-one percent of the Långasjö farm sons and eighty percent of non-farmers' sons in British Columbia (Table 4.5 and 4.6).¹¹

On the other hand, sons of landless parents were unlikely to become farm owners, or to switch occupations in British Columbia. However, since they tended to remain working at their first occupation, they were also much more likely to get promoted, most often to section foreman, but in some cases to road master, train engineer or conductor.¹² As we shall see later in the chapter, persistence and promotion seemed to have helped some immigrants from the landless stratum to save enough funds to return to Långasjö and buy a farm. On the one hand, their Swedish background mattered very little in determining Långasjö immigrants' occupation in B.C, since only a minority was able to work in the same vocation as they had followed at home. On the other, internal stratification among Långasjö immigrants seems to have encouraged dissimilar strategies between the groups, which influenced occupational mobility and promotion in British Columbia.

¹¹ See also Appendix 5a and 5b. In the group "Other", the only Långasjö immigrants who became farmers, the parents' occupation is unknown. Considering the pattern, however, it is likely that they came from farm families. Only two non-farmers – two sons of rural constables – were self-employed. The other thirty-six remained in occupations such as brush making, mining, paper mills, farmhands, logging, construction and bridge building.

¹² Shelton Stromquist argues that in the United States, engineers and conductors were prestige positions that overwhelmingly went to native-born personnel. Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor conflict in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 189.

Sons of farmers and non-farmers clearly had different occupational experiences in British Columbia, and if we break down farmers and non-farmers into distinct subgroups the patterns become more transparent. Sons of crofters and sons of labourers had different prospects in Sweden, and an economic and social gulf divided farms of less than 1/20 mantal from those of 1/2 a mantal or more. The farm size that was most common among emigrants was between 1/8 and 1/4 of a mantal, that is half the recommended area for a farm capable of supporting an average family. Although continuous farm divisions created unequal numbers of farms in 1900 and 1936, Table 4.4 shows that Långasjö immigrants in B.C. came from a fairly even representation of farm sizes in Långasjö parish. It is difficult to calculate how well represented the non-farming groups were among emigrants and thus compare them to farmers, but the under-representation of Group 3 indicates that sons of disadvantaged small farmers found it more difficult to finance emigration. John Johansson claims that emigration among the landless was slow to commence precisely because they had a difficult time in collecting the necessary funds for travel and initial survival in North America, and the same seems to be true for children raised on very small landholdings.¹³

Table 4.4: Farm sizes in Långasjö 1900 and 1936, and Emigrant Group 1-3, men and women.

| Farm size | In Långasjö 1900 | | Långasjö 1936 | | Emigrant group | |
|--------------|------------------|---------|---------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| | Percent | Numbers | Percent | Numbers | Percent | Numbers |
| Group 1 | 21% | 54 | 33% | 106 | 27% | 50 |
| Group 2 | 48% | 122 | 36% | 114 | 58% | 107 |
| Group 3 | 31% | 78 | 31% | 99 | 15% | 28 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100% | 254 | 100% | 319 | 100% | 185 |

Source: Eric Elqvist, ed., *Långasjö. Försök till en sockenbeskrivning* (1938), 94; and Table 4.

¹³ See for instance Johan Alfred Larsson, the son of a single mother, who worked as a section man in British Columbia between 1913 and 1925, when he returned to Sweden. After his return he worked as a labourer, and although he tried, he was unable to afford a second emigration to B.C. As a contrast, John Arthur Strand, whose father owned 1/5 mantal, borrowed money from his father to pay for the costs. See Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 459, and 878.

The majority of Långasjö male immigrants in British Columbia worked for the railway, mostly the Canadian Pacific Railway, but also for private logging railways. It was not unusual for the CPR to hire according to ethnicity. Chinese labourers helped build the initial CP rail line, and Italians made up a large part of the unskilled railway workers in Montreal, Quebec, and the British born were over-represented in the CPR's Mechanical Departments, both among skilled and unskilled workers.¹⁴ Thus, the Canadian Pacific Railway had a history of ethnic cluster employment, and for a total of 202 Långasjö men in British Columbia, their first work employment experience was for the railway.¹⁵ The second most common vocation among Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia – mining – employed only 14 men, and the occupation in third place – logging – employed only 11 Långasjö men in their first job hunt (Table 4.5 and 4.6). Although some men left for other work, the railway remained the major employer for Långasjö men in British Columbia. There are three ways to determine the uniqueness of this development. The first is to see how the Canadian Census defines Scandinavian occupations in British Columbia. A second is to study employment patterns among Swedish workers from other parts of Sweden, and the third alternative is to see if Långasjö immigrants in the United States showed a similar preference for railway work.

¹⁴ Bruno Ramirez, "Brief Encounters: Italian Immigrant Workers and the CPR 1900-30," *Labour/Le Travail* 17 (Spring 1986): 9-27; and Mary MacKinnon, "Canadian Railway Workers and World War I Military Service," *Labour/Le Travail* 40 (Fall 1997): 213-23.

¹⁵ This was not particular for the Canadian railways. During nineteenth-century railway construction in the United States, ethnic stratification was the norm. While nearly all the engineers and conductors were native born, the ethnic clustering in other trades differed from area to area. Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers*, 189.

Table 4.5: First Occupation for Långasjö men in British Columbia based on parent occupation.

| First occupation BC | Total | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Barber | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction/carpenter | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Farmhand | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Farming | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Factory work | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fisherman | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Logging | 7 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Mining/smelter | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Professional | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway | 108 | 19 | 65 | 21 | 3 |
| Sawmill worker | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Self employed | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Tradesman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 28 | 8 | 15 | 2 | 3 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>175</i> | <i>41</i> | <i>99</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>8</i> |

Table 4.6: First Occupation for Långasjö men in British Columbia based on parent occupation.

| | Total | Farm Rent | Crofter | Trades | Labourer | Soldier | Other |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>First occupation BC</i> | | | | | | | |
| Barber | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction/carpenter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Farmhand | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Farming | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Factory work | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fisherman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Logging | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Mining/smelter | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Professional | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway | 94 | 7 | 19 | 14 | 19 | 15 | 20 |
| Sawmill worker | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Self employed | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tradesman | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>117</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>25</i> |

The Canadian Census proves to be a blunt tool in calculating Swedish employment in railways. It does not isolate Scandinavians before 1931 nor does it single out individual nationalities. A related problem is that the Census lumps Scandinavian-

born individuals with those who were born in Canada or the United States but of Scandinavian origin. Considering that the Scandinavian land of origin had a lesser impact on Canadian-born individuals than on those born in the “old country,” the lack of national specification impedes this kind of study.¹⁶ Still, the 1931 Census helps isolate certain trends. It shows that of 16 552 Scandinavian men working in B.C., 3 147 were employed in “Logging”, 2 680 in “Agriculture,” 1 407 in “Building and Construction,” 1 308 in “Fishing,” 1 230 in “Manufacturing,” and only 1 169 in the umbrella group “Transportation and Communication,” out of which railway work comprised 408 male employees.¹⁷ Thus, logging, agriculture and construction attracted the majority of Scandinavians, while railways only employed a small minority. The Långasjö migration data, however, looks at the years 1880 to 1930, while the Census only covers 1931. Considering the differences in range, long-term development could have been concealed in the wider-ranging Långasjö data, but a closer look at the date of immigration does not suggest any periodic changes in types of employment.¹⁸ According to the Census, therefore, Långasjö immigrants were over-represented among Scandinavian railway workers despite the fact that few Långasjö immigrants in B.C. had prior experience of railway work.

Comparing the Långasjö immigrants with one contemporary list of male immigrants from all of Sweden confirms the hypothesis that Långasjö men were over-

¹⁶ The group “Scandinavian” consisted of Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Icelanders. Among the group Scandinavian males living in B.C. in 1931, were 10 434 Swedes, 8 258 Norwegians, 2 509 Danes, and 429 Icelanders. See Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 31, 1931.

¹⁷ Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 49, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada and the provinces, 1931.

¹⁸ Forty-nine Långasjö men emigrated to B.C. before 1900, and for 28 of those (57 %), the first occupation was the railroad; of 165 men who immigrated between 1900 and 1915, 116 (71%) worked for the railway; and of 78 Långasjö men who immigrated to British Columbia. between 1915 and 1930, 58 (74%) worked for the railway. That the ratio of Långasjö men in the railway was higher post 1900 likely reflects that it took time for Långasjö men to build up an ethnic dominance in the B.C. railway industry.

represented in railway work. Between 1908 and 1938 a Swedish fraternal aid society in Vancouver, SVEA, kept careful records of 249 of its members. While many of these men worked locally, many others were employed in various resource industries in rural British Columbia. These records included name, date of birth, birthplace, date of immigration to Canada, residence in B.C., and occupation in British Columbia. For eighty-eight members this was enough information to find them in Swedish emigration records in order to compare their occupation prior to emigration with that in British Columbia.¹⁹ The SVEA list indicates both differences and similarities in occupational history. The SVEA men differed by being more occupationally diverse than was the case with the Långasjö group. Only four of the eighty-eight worked in the B.C. railways, while twenty-four were labourers, seventeen carpenters, and twelve SVEA men were loggers. They corresponded with the Långasjö pattern, however, in that most Swedish immigrants, regardless of home district, worked in different occupations in B.C. than they had practiced in the homeland. Of tradesmen from Sweden, only the carpenters retained their trade in B.C.; the two Swedish loggers became a carpenter and a welder; the miner, a labourer; the miller, a logger; and the blacksmith worked as a carpenter in British Columbia.²⁰ Clearly, Långasjö immigrants' occupational experiences were unique in the sense that they were concentrated among railway workers, but their tendency to practice a different vocation in B.C. from what had been the case in Sweden was also common in other Swedish immigrant groups.

Moreover, Långasjö immigrants in the United States were less likely to work on the railway than were their friends in British Columbia, but then occupations depended

¹⁹ Appendix 8.

²⁰ Appendix 8. Occupations under "Other" include baker, notary, waiter, hotelkeeper, millwright, engineer, marine, and welder.

on geographical location. Thus, Långasjö immigrants in Montana tended to be miners and smelter workers, while they were loggers and sawmill workers in Washington, farmhands and farmers in the mid-West, and construction workers and self-employed in urban Minnesota.²¹ This suggests that the Långasjö experience in British Columbia was only unique in the sense that the men were concentrated in the railway industry. It was not unique in the sense that they had tendencies toward ethnic clustering in the receiving area. Naturally, available employment in the different geographical areas was the most important factor; a person is unlikely to be a miner in a predominantly agricultural district, nor a logger on the prairies. But considering that the Canadian Census shows that very few Scandinavians worked for the railways, the answer must be found elsewhere as to why just Långasjö men were attracted to the CPR. Therefore, the Swedish background does nothing to explain occupation in B.C., or for that matter in the United States; however, the Swedish background does make a key difference in that the Långasjö immigrants behaved according to a classic chain migration pattern, creating networks and following each other into new occupations in the new country.

The discussion above only considers first employment, and many of the Långasjö immigrants changed occupation, some frequently, others occasionally. For the most part the change in vocation did not lead to upward mobility, but the majority remained labourers, just in different industries.²² Of sixty-one farmers' sons who reported having worked in more than one industry, forty-eight went from one labouring job to another, most often from the railway to mining and smelting, but logging, sawmill, carpentry, and

²¹ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 805-807.

²² Note that this takes into account only the immigrant's second occupation; as seen in Appendix 5a and b, some worked in three occupations or more, which are not accounted for here. None of the multi-occupation cases, however, led to any significant social improvement.

construction also attracted the attention of farm sons from Långasjö.²³ Only three switched from other occupations to railway work. In terms of upward social mobility, farmers' sons were much better off. Of thirteen such immigrants, seven became owners of agricultural properties. Altogether, six farm sons became farmers, two bought taxi companies, one became a contractor, one bought a fruit orchard, another a fishing boat, one became electrical inspector, and one worked as a barber in Vancouver. Thus, seventy-nine percent of the farm sons who changed occupation did not experience any upward social shift, only eleven percent were able to purchase some kind of farm,²⁴ and nine percent moved into self-employed or non-labour occupations that were much different from anything experienced in Långasjö.

Immigrants from non-farming Långasjö families were even less prone to social advancement through a change of occupation. Of a total of thirty-four immigrants from non-farming families in Långasjö, five became farmers the first time they switched occupation and one trained to be a barber. The others, however, stayed in occupations such as mining, logging, construction and millwork, and general labour. None of the sons who came from the more disadvantaged families in Långasjö managed to become self-employed in British Columbia. While more Långasjö men worked in agriculture in their second occupation, the majority were employed in vocations unlike any they had

²³ It is difficult to calculate wages for different occupations, since this depended on many factors and differed between employees. For example, Carl Johansson, the son of an unwed mother, accounted for wages earned in different B.C. employments between 1891 and 1938. He started as a section man at the CPR (\$1.25/day (approximately \$32.50/month), but was promoted to section foreman a few months later (\$54.50/month). When he was laid off due to a flooding in 1894, he worked as a logger near Golden (\$26/month), and was hired as a coalminer in Ottertail in 1895 (\$52/month). In 1896, Carl worked in a mine in Bute Inlet (\$26/month plus room and board), and in 1897 he returned to work as a section foreman for the CPR (\$58.50/month). When Carl visited Långasjö in 1897 he met his future wife, and the couple returned to B.C. the same year. From there on Carl stayed with the CPR working as a foreman until his retirement in 1938. See Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 229-230.

²⁴ This figure only considers men who changed occupations. If we look at Långasjö men as a total group the percentage of farmers is much lower, at four percent.

experienced in Sweden. A clear pattern emerges: Långasjö immigrants in all groups who changed occupations moved from ethnic clustering in one occupation to a closer resemblance of the occupational diversity among the general Swedish population in British Columbia. Nonetheless, for the most part occupational mobility was a lateral rather than upward movement.

Table 4.7: Second Occupation for Långasjö men in B.C., based on parent's occupation.

| Second occupation | Total | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Barber | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Construction/carpenter | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Farmhand | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Farming | 7 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Factory work | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fish boat owner | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Logging | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| Mining/smelter | 11 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Professional | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Sawmill worker | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Self employed | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Tradesman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other/General Labour | 13 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>61</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>36</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>3</i> |

Table 4.8: Second Occupation for Långasjö men in B.C., based on parent's occupation.

| Second occupation | Total | Farm Rent | Crofter | Trades | Labourer | Soldier | Other |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Barber | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Construction/carpenter | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Farmhand | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Farming | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Factory work | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fisherman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Logging | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mining/smelter | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Professional | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Sawmill worker | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Self employed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tradesman | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>34</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>8</i> |

A related conundrum was the propensity of Långasjö men to get promoted by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Eighty-two men, a full twenty-eight percent of all Långasjö men who worked for the railways in British Columbia were at some point promoted to foremen, and four percent advanced to even higher positions.²⁵ This development seems unique not just for Swedish immigrants in general but for patterns of ethnic employment within the CPR in Canada. MacKinnon notes that although scores of British born in skilled positions left the CPR for the military during the First World War, the company tended not to hire or promote other European immigrants to these vacant places. Europeans, other than the British born, “either did not possess, or were thought not to possess, the necessary skills. The native born – both Anglophone and Francophone – were in a much better position to fill jobs the British were leaving.”²⁶ Likewise, Bruno Ramirez argues that few of the many Italian workers employed by the CPR in Montreal, were found in skilled or leading positions. Ramirez even suggests that the CPR devised hiring strategies that excluded Italians from skilled work by enforcing culturally specific “intelligence” test that made it difficult for Italians to qualify.²⁷ Thus, an unusual number of Långasjö men who worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway seem to have been offered positions as foremen or better in British Columbia.

The majority of Långasjö men worked as section men, which requires less training than more specialized trades, but Shelton Stromquist argues that it, too,

²⁵ As a comparison, in 1931, 0.76 % of all Scandinavians in B.C. forest industry worked as foremen. A comparative figure for British workers was 2.3 %, Germans 6.8 %, French 1.6 %, Eastern European 0.5 %, and Chinese 0.3%. Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 49, 1931. Neither is there any evidence that Långasjö immigrants enjoyed a similar degree of promotion in other industries. Among the listing self-employed and foremen, there are one foreman in a haulage company, one in an agricultural setting, one electrical inspector, and four contractors. See Långasjö Database.

²⁶ MacKinnon, “Canadian Railway Workers and World War I Military Service,” 227.

²⁷ Ramirez, “Brief Encounters,” 19-23. None of the interviews or biographies in *En smålandssocken emigrerar* suggests that similar testing took place in British Columbia.

“require[ed] care and precision, which came only with experience or very close supervision.”²⁸ This was even more true for the section foreman who “had to know ’the proper elevation to give a curve of certain degrees [and] must understand the scientific principle of easements, or runoffs, the gradual reduction of the elevation of a curve, which causes a car to regain equilibrium after rounding it.”²⁹ Since Långasjö men generally lacked the necessary background that one should expect in a good section foreman, it begs the question as to why they were so easily promoted.³⁰

Eric Svensson, son of a crofter, is a revealing example of how Långasjö men were aided by each other and by their reputation as good railway workers. When Eric first arrived in Field looking for work he was greeted by the foreman Karl Oscar Gottfridsson and the road master Frank Lind, both from Långasjö villages. Lind immediately offered Eric work as a foreman, suggesting that he would make “as good of an extra-gang boss” as his brother had been.³¹ On Eric’s first day at work he met a farmhand from his home parish, and a month later when he transferred to Moberly he met up with several more Långasjö men.³² Eric therefore found himself in a working environment that consisted of a network of Långasjö immigrants that actively aided each other. In all, 113 Långasjö

²⁸ Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers*, 106.

²⁹ From William John Pinkerton, *His Personal Record: Stories of Railroad Life* (Kansas City, Mo.: 1904), quoted in Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers*, 106.

³⁰ One possible, but difficult to confirm, hypothesis is that Swedes were better educated in basic mathematics than other European groups, which might have given them a better understanding of railway construction. Thus, while the CPR were likely unaware of the Swedish schooling system, they would have noted if Swedish workers performed well or not. See Lars G. Sandberg, “The Case of the Impoverished Sophisticate: Human Capital and Swedish Economic Growth before World War I,” *Journal of Economic History* 34 (1979): 225-242; and Chapter 2, footnote # 4. John Johansson, however, notes that up to 1919, the Swedish school system was criticized for focusing on teaching the catechism. Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 46.

³¹ Eric Svensson’s brother, Hjalmar, had died in typhoid fever in 1922. Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 487.

³² Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 884-6.

men reported receiving help from either a relative or parish friend after arrival in British Columbia, and 114 claimed to have travelled to B.C. with other Långasjö villagers.³³

The answer as to why so many Långasjö immigrants worked in the railway and were able to enjoy a high rate of promotion had little to do with their previous experience or social background in Sweden, and had everything to do with circumstances in British Columbia. Eric Sager and Christopher Morier argue that the “idea that immigrants were streamed into the lowest levels of the socioeconomic order is both historically inaccurate and dangerous for any implications it may carry into the present.”³⁴ Ethnicity certainly mattered, but occupational ghettoization was more related to prejudice and racism toward visible minorities than it was to immigration per se. The dominant Anglo-Protestant group had preconceived ideas of ethnic aptitude, which created different prospects for different ethnic groups, regardless of immigrant status.³⁵ For Långasjö male immigrants this worked to their advantage. They were able to create an ethnic community that provided support and employment to fellow parishioners, and the CPR co-operated by giving Långasjö employees free rein to promote friends and relatives. It was a circle of employment and promotion that worked to their benefit. As a group, they had gained a reputation as valuable workers, which aided their upward mobility to positions as foremen or better, and their elevated positions enabled them to hire new arrivals from the home district.

Thus, groups that were more disadvantaged in Långasjö advanced as foremen for the CPR. On the other hand, immigrants from medium sized or larger farms, that is those

³³ Database, Långasjö men.

³⁴ Eric W. Sager and Christopher Morier, “Immigrants, Ethnicity, and Earnings in 1901: Revisiting Canada’s Vertical Mosaic,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 83.2 (June 2002): 228.

³⁵ Sager and Morier, “Immigrants, Ethnicity, and Earnings in 1901,” 229

who were more likely to receive financial support from their families, were more likely to start farms in B.C. than to become railway foremen (Table 4.10). Traditionally, Swedish immigrants in North America arrived with the intention of becoming farm owners. This changed somewhat over time as travel costs dropped and labour migration became more widespread. In the later migration period, many intended only to work in North America for a few years in order to save money to improve the quality of life in Sweden. This was particularly true among immigrants from more disadvantaged social groups. Farmers, regardless of the size of home farm (Table 4.9), however, were more likely to settle and acquire farms, possibly because their understanding about farming gave them a better appreciation of the opportunities offered; it is also likely that they were in a better position to acquire the necessary funds, perhaps as inheritance money during ownership transfer of the family farm in Sweden.³⁶ Thus, it seems that different social groups from Långasjö arrived with different goals and opportunities, and therefore had different strategies and expectations in regards to work.

Table 4.9: Långasjö farmers in B.C.: Based on parent's occupation, Group 1-3, Farm renter, Crofter, Soldier, Labourer, Indigent and Single Mother.

| Groups | Total Emigrants | Total Farmers | Percent Farmers |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| A: Group 1 | 41 | 4 | 10% |
| B: Group 2 | 99 | 8 | 8% |
| C: Group 3 | 27 | 4 | 15% |
| D: Farm rent + Crofter | 30 | 2 | 7% |
| E: Tradesmen | 18 | 0 | 0% |
| F: Soldier, Labourer, Indigent, Single Mother | 52 | 1 | 2% |
| <i>Total groups A-F:</i> | <i>267</i> | <i>19</i> | <i>7%</i> |

Table excludes Group 4, Other and N/A whose social-economic background is unclear.

Table 4.10: Långasjö Rail Foremen in B.C.: According to Father's occupation.

| Groups | Total | Total | Percentage |
|--------|-------|-------|------------|
|--------|-------|-------|------------|

³⁶ For example, Frans August Johansson emigrated 1911, the same year as his older brother bought out his siblings and took over the family farm. Frans then worked for a few years in British Columbia before buying land in Cloverdale. Johansson, *En Smålandssocken emigrerar* 429 and *Gård och by*, 330.

| | Emigrants | Foremen | Foremen |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|
| A: Group 1 | 41 | 6 | 15% |
| B: Group 2 | 99 | 19 | 19% |
| C: Group 3 | 27 | 10 | 37% |
| D: Group 4 | 8 | 2 | 25% |
| E: Farm rent + Crofter | 30 | 18 | 60% |
| F: Tradesmen | 18 | 6 | 33% |
| G: Soldier, Labourer, Indigent, Single Mother | 52 | 17 | 33% |
| H: Other | 4 | 0 | 0% |
| I: N/A | 13 | 4 | 31% |
| Total groups A-I: | 292 | 82 | 28% |

Migration did not mean a similar change in occupational pattern for women. As seen in Table 4.4, the social group distribution was fairly equal among both Långasjö men and women who landed in British Columbia. The relatively high proportion of farmers' daughters thus reflected the social composition of the home parish. Keeping in mind that the small sample of women makes all conclusions hazardous, the number of women from the poor and the landless is still striking. In a study on female emigration, Ann-Sofie Kälve­mark argues that the female emigration from Sweden was structured differently from that of the male, and that women had different opportunities and expectations than did men. Kälve­mark claims that prior to the 1890s, single female emigration was unusual, but around the turn of the century the emigration rate of unmarried women started to approach that of single men.³⁷ This change was noteworthy since women lived under a great deal of constraint within the family and because of their negligible earning power, depended on male support to finance the emigration.³⁸

Kälve­mark also finds differences in economic resources and autonomy between farmers'

³⁷ Altogether emigrated 521 000 women and 717 000 men from Sweden during the years 1851 to 1908. If we only consider single adults in the period 1851 to 1908 emigrated on the average 652 single women for every 1000 single men; however, the corresponding figures for 1890 to 1900 was 981 single women to 1000 single men. Note that Kälve­mark's figures include all of North America, of which the emigration to Canada was only a fraction. Ann-Sofie Kälve­mark, "Utvandring och självständighet. Några synpunkter på den kvinnliga emigrationen från Sverige," *Historisk Tidskrift* (1983): 143-47.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 164-66.

daughters and servants. While the former had potential access to more money, the latter were less restricted in movements; thus, working women were less likely to have to ask a male relative for permission to emigrate, but they were also more dependent on financial aid, most often in form of a pre-paid ticket sent from overseas.³⁹

Thus, the Långasjö migration was unusual in its relatively high number of disadvantaged women in a movement where women were strikingly underrepresented, more so than among the general Swedish immigration in British Columbia. One hypothesis is that the large number of male emigrants changed the social structure in Sweden in favour of farmers' daughters. Since more women were able to run the family farm together with their husbands, there may have been less incentive for women from the land-owning strata to emigrate. Thus, the seemingly large number of disadvantaged women in the Långasjö group does not reflect changing financial circumstances for the poor, but may indicate that fewer farm women emigrated than would have been the case had not the high male emigration opened up new opportunities.

Clearly, however, in accordance to Ann-Sofie Källemark's findings, women were more likely than men to have had their emigration financed by friends or relatives. Twenty Långasjö women stated that they had received some help to emigrate. In John Johansson's study, seven families, seventy-seven single men, and fifty-three single women leaving from Malmö port traveled on a pre-paid ticket. Thus, forty-one percent of the single emigrants who traveled on a pre-paid ticket from Malmö were women, while women constituted less than thirty percent among all Långasjö emigrants to North

³⁹ Likewise, Ulf Beijbom argues that "the majority of single, female emigrants left Sweden on pre-paid tickets." Ulf Beijbom, "The Promised Land for Swedish Maids," in Swedes in America: Intercultural and Interethnic Perspectives on Contemporary Research: New Perspectives, ed. Ulf Beijbom (The Swedish Emigrant Institute, Series 6, 1993): 110

America.⁴⁰ This indicates an over-representation among women in the pre-paid category, but not as large an over-representation as Kälve mark's findings might suggest. It is uncertain how other women managed to finance the journey, but clearly they were not altogether helpless despite their substandard wages. In fact, although they could only find service-oriented employment in B.C., Långasjö women occasionally sent money home to help sponsor new emigrants. Marilyn Barber notes that since maids received room and board as part of their wage, they were more able to send money home than were factory workers. Barber even claims that "some families undoubtedly preferred to send daughters rather than sons across the Atlantic because daughters were believed to be more reliable in returning money home."⁴¹ Of 154 Långasjö emigrants in Johansson's study who received some help, either in form of monetary support or help getting settled, nine received the assistance from a female relative, either a sister or an aunt.⁴²

One example of female sponsorship was Hulda Helena Johansdotter, whose father owned a small farm (9/64 mantal) in Långasjö. Hulda was first in her family to emigrate, and the text implies that she traveled alone to British Columbia.⁴³ A year after immigrating, Hulda married a Swedish farmer in Golden. Hulda later either actively sponsored or encouraged two siblings to immigrate to B.C., since in 1898 her brother Sven Ernst arrived in Golden, and her sister Emma Lydia immigrated to Kimberley in 1911.⁴⁴ Similarly, Amanda Johansdotter, a tailor's daughter, was widely recognized for

⁴⁰ Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 780 and 797.

⁴¹ Marilyn Barber, "Domestic Servants: Confederation to the First World War," in Canada: Confederation to Present, Bob Hesketh and Chris Hackett, eds., (web article, <http://www.chinookmultimedia.com>), np55.

⁴² Database Långasjö, men and women.

⁴³ While the names of the two are not connected, Frans August Johansson, a crofter's son, left on the same day from the same port, also travelling to Field. Frans, however, is not found in B.C. Vital Statistics, nor could the researchers uncover information regarding his later travels. See Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 242.

⁴⁴ Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 242, 264 and 429.

helping other Långasjö emigrants get settled in B.C., among others her nephew Karl Johansson. In honour of her hospitality, other Långasjö immigrants nicknamed Amanda's farm in Moyie "the Sunshine Farm," testimony to the emotional value of ethnic support.⁴⁵ Women thus were likely to need a man's help to finance emigration, but many were also able and willing to extend the same services to relatives still in Långasjö.

While Långasjö men developed occupational patterns that differed from those of other Swedish immigrants in B.C., most women fell under the same occupational norm in both countries. Two women worked in hotels, while fifteen were either domestic workers or waitresses (Table 4.11). Marilyn Barber notes that domestic service was "the most important occupation for single immigrant women during the period from the 1860s to the First World War."⁴⁶ Since Swedish women in Canada and in the United States commonly worked in service-oriented occupations, it is not surprising to see that Långasjö women in British Columbia also fell under that category.⁴⁷ According to Census Canada, fifty-eight percent of Scandinavian female workers were employed in the service industry, mostly in domestic service, but also in restaurants or boarding houses.⁴⁸ Although two Långasjö sisters had briefly been self-employed, co-owning a restaurant in Golden, the occupational choices for immigrant women were clearly limited in scope.

Historians differ on the benefits and nature of domestic service. Magda Fahrni suggests that domestic servants in Canada typically suffered from loneliness. Moreover, although restrictions in free time and movement inhibited romantic relationships, the

⁴⁵ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 262 and 526-27.

⁴⁶ Barber, "Domestic Servants: Confederation to the First World War," np.

⁴⁷ For Swedish women in British Columbia, see Eva St Jean, "Swedish Immigrant Women: 'Never, Never Sorry — Always Glad.'" *British Columbia Historical News* 30.1 (Winter 1996-97): 30-33.

⁴⁸ Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 49, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada and the provinces, 1931.

nature of their occupation put them at high risk for sexual harassment from their employers, which, paradoxically, caused the middle class to view the women as morally suspect. Marriage became the desired escape from such misery.⁴⁹ Inga Holmberg is also critical of Swedish women's working condition in American households. She argues that rather than seeking out and being empowered by work as a maid, Swedish women had no available alternatives, and that they, just as native-born women, preferred factory work to domestic service.⁵⁰

Fahrni and Holmblad paint a much darker picture of domestic work than do other studies of Swedish women in North America. Joy Lintelman argues that a close-knit Swedish ethnic community put Swedish domestic servants in the United States in a stronger position of power than that of their native-born counterparts, and that they were "not so eager to obtain other forms of employment."⁵¹ Ulf Beijbom also claims that letters home indicate "an extremely positive view of life for the Swedish maid."⁵² There are few studies on Scandinavian domestic servants in Canada, but Varpu Lindstrom-Best's studies of Finnish maids in Canada indicate a similar strong sense of self-worth and independence despite the obvious restrictions within domestic service.⁵³

⁴⁹ Magda Fahrni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids: Respectability and the Case of Domestic Service, 1880-1914," *Labour/le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 85-87.

⁵⁰ Inga Holmblad, "Taboos and Morals or Economy and Family Status? Occupational Choice among Immigrant Women in the US," in *Swedish Life in American Cities*, ed. Dag Blanck and Harald Runblom (Uppsala: Sweden: Center of Multiethnic Research, 1991), 25-43.

⁵¹ Joy Lintelman, "'America is the woman's promised land': Swedish Immigrant Women and American Domestic Service," *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 1989): 16 and 19.

⁵² Beijbom, "The Promised Land for Swedish Maids," 112.

⁵³ Varpu Lindström-Best, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada* (Toronto, 1988). Most researchers of domestic servants rely on interviews and letters to inform on how women experienced their work place. See for example Varpu Lindström-Best, "'I won't be a slave!' – Finnish Domestic in Canada, 1911-30," in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986). Other Canadian historians, however, argue that women created positive myths regarding their work in order to overcome the disappointment over the harsh reality of life in Canada. Thus, they argue that historians cannot take such stories at face value. Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici, "Exploring Myths in Women's Narratives:

Nonetheless, while it is debatable how well Swedish women enjoyed the domestic work, it clearly was a common occupation for Långasjö and other immigrant women in North America.

Table 4.11: First occupation of Långasjö women in Western Canada⁵⁴

| Parent occupation | Total | First Occupation in British Columbia. | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|--|
| | | Domestic | Waitress | Self empl | Farm wife | Married | N/A | Other | |
| Farm own, Group 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Farm own, Group 2 | 11 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 | |
| Farm own, Group 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| Farm rent | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Crofter | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Labourer | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | |
| Single Mother | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Soldier | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Tailor | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Merchant | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Other | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>39</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>2</i> | |

If we look at the second occupation among Långasjö women we find that the number of Långasjö women who became farmwives increased.⁵⁵ In total, five women in British Columbia and one who ended up in Alberta farmed together with their husbands. Thus, fifteen percent of the women became farm owners, which is more than triple the four percent of male Långasjö farmers in British Columbia. As with the men, the women mostly came from families with some connection to farming in Långasjö: four women were farm daughters, while the fifth was a born to a crofter. The exception was the daughter of an impoverished tailor who later gained a reputation for her hospitality

Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961," *BC Studies* 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 159-182.

⁵⁴ Thirty-eight Långasjö women settled in B.C. and one in Alberta. In addition to these thirty-nine, one unwed mother with two children settled in Winnipeg. Considering that Långasjö parishioners lost contact with her fairly soon, she might have consciously removed herself from moral censure.

⁵⁵ Database Långasjö, "Women."

toward other Swedish immigrants.⁵⁶ All women who became farmwives married Swedish men, although only two married men from Långasjö parish. These women thus entered a life with the cultural and linguistic comfort of a compatriot husband and a familial work environment; still, since the only available alternative work was in the service sector, being a farmwife was likely a tempting, if perhaps deceiving, gateway to workplace autonomy.

The different strategies that men and women from different groups employed in British Columbia also had a bearing on occupation in Sweden for those who remigrated. Mark Wyman suggests that temporary labour migration must be considered in a different light from that of permanent immigration. For immigrants who planned to return to the homeland, waged employment was preferable to farming or self employment in North America, since the purpose was to save as much money as quickly as possible. Wyman suggests that this had implications for the labour movement: since sojourners had no long-term interest in improving work conditions, they were less concerned with unions and unwilling to strike. The focus on paid labour, he claims, is a part of understanding why so many returnees took up farming rather than industrial work after returning to the homeland.⁵⁷ Wage labour in North America simply was the means to reach the goal of independent farming in the home country. This was also true for the Långasjö immigrants, many of whom reached the goal of owning a farm in Sweden. Regardless of occupation in B.C., between twenty-three and forty-eight percent of the Långasjö immigrants returned to Sweden. The majority chose to resettle in Långasjö, or in a neighbouring parish with similar agricultural focus. For these remigrants it meant a return

⁵⁶ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 262, and page 28 in the text above.

⁵⁷ Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America. The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880-1930* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 204.

to limited occupational choices, with only a few openings for tradesmen and where workers were mostly stonecutters or farm hands. It is not surprising that the dream for those who still chose to return was to become an independent farm owner.

Many of these new farm owners belonged to social groups who were unlikely to have become landed had they never emigrated. The yearly Långasjö income for a farmhand in 1907 was 300 Swedish *kronor* (a maid's wage was 150 *kronor*) while a small to average farm sold for around 5000 *kronor*, making it nearly impossible for those who lacked other funds to save for a farm.⁵⁸ Christer Persson's study on nineteenth-century land ownership in Locknevi shows that a majority of all free holding farmers in Sweden were children of free holding farmers. The parents of the few who were not farm sons were in most cases farm renters, crofters and soldiers, that is, groups with agricultural ties. Thus, it was "vital to have parents who belonged to the landholding section in order to become established as a landowner, either by being a child of a landowner or by marrying into the family."⁵⁹ Among the remigrants from B.C., however, the numbers indicate that two prominent groups among foremen in the CPR – crofters and sons from very small Långasjö farms – were likely to become farmers in Långasjö (Table 4.12). As seen in Chapter Two, crofters and soldiers' sons in the "twin" cohort only occasionally became farm owners in Långasjö, which is consistent with Persson's findings in Locknevi. Among the returnees, however, eleven of fourteen sons from non-

⁵⁸ Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 807.

⁵⁹ Persson, *Jorden, Bonden och hans familj*, 259-261. Persson's findings also agree with similar studies elsewhere in Sweden. See J.O. Björkman, *Bonde och tjänstehjon. Om social stratifiering i äldre mellansvensk agrarbygd*, (Uppsala, 1974), and C. Ahlberger, "Vävarfolket. Hemindustrin i Mark 1790-1850," *Institutet för lokalhistorik forskning, skriftserie, Nr. 1* (Göteborg, 1988).

landowning groups, but with previous agricultural experience (crofters etc.), were able to become farmers after returning to Långasjö.⁶⁰

It is not necessarily true that only sons from large farms were destined to own large farms after remigrating. Of two remigrants from farms that were larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ mantal, one took over his parent's farm, and the other bought or inherited that of his new wife, which in this case was $\frac{1}{4}$ mantal. Since both these men inherited land, they likely received a fair amount of support from the family.⁶¹ As a comparison among crofters, Johan August Karlsson and Frans Aldo Carlson both bought farms of approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mantal in size, and Frans Algot Strand bought a $\frac{1}{5}$ mantal farm.⁶² For these three men the accomplishment was that much more remarkable since they could not have received much financial assistance from family. Nonetheless, it is clear that groups who had some previous experience of farming in Sweden were more likely to return to Långasjö as independent farmers. In fact, the success rate among a disadvantaged group such as crofters' sons was phenomenal both in upward mobility in B.C. and as remigrants to Sweden.⁶³ On the other hand, emigrating groups who had little or no experience of farming in Långasjö were least likely to succeed as farmers upon return to Sweden. Table 4.12 indicates that this is even more evident when it is taken into account that four of the soldier's sons, whose fathers lived on government provided crofts, returned as farmers,

⁶⁰ The crofters who became farm owners after returning to the district had stayed in B.C. a comparably long time. The shortest stay in B.C. was nine years and the longest sixteen years. Other studies show that emigrants normally return within the first seven years. For example, see F. P. Cerase, "A study of Italian Migrants Returning from the USA," The International Migration Review (1967).

⁶¹ Nils Wahlin pointed out that parents' frequently put an artificially low price on the farm in order for one child to afford to buy out his or her siblings. This created hard feelings among siblings who felt cheated on their inheritance.

⁶² The information on the various farm sizes is found in Gård och by i Långasjö socken.

⁶³ All of soldier Sven Gustaf Alm's children – four sons – emigrated to North America. One became permanent resident in the U.S. but three returned to Långasjö. On their return, two sons married farmer's daughters with properties of $\frac{1}{4}$ mantal and $\frac{9}{64}$ mantal and the third became a furniture carpenter. Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 257, 303, and 358.

while none of the returning labourers' sons managed to do the same.⁶⁴ Thus, as seen in Chapter Two, the socio-economic position of the parents determined sons' ability to become farm owners for those who never emigrated, but it was less important for emigrants who returned to Långasjö. Here, it was more important to have some prior experience in farming in Långasjö, even if that was only from a crofter's small land lot.

Table 4.12: Number of farmers among male remigrants in Långasjö parish: According to Parent's occupation.

| | Total | Remigrants | Farmers |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------|---------|
| <i>All Groups</i> | 292 | 96 | 60 |
| A: Group 1 | 41 | 9 | 7 |
| B: Group 2 | 99 | 34 | 22 |
| C: Group 3 | 27 | 13 | 10 |
| D: Group 4 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| E: Farm rent/Crofter*/Soldier | 51 | 15 | 12 |
| F: Craftsmen | 18 | 6 | 2 |
| G: Labourer/Indigent | 31 | 9 | 1 |
| H: Constable/Merchant | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| I: N/A | 13 | 5 | 3 |

*One crofter in this group is listed as "indigent" in the Church books.

Connected to the ability to succeed is the ability to marry and create families, but this proved to be difficult for Långasjö men. A recent Canadian study suggests that as the West became increasingly settled, the image of the single man changed from a symbol of virility and hope to being suspect. This was particularly true for the immigrant male. On the prairies, it resulted in a higher conviction rate for sexual offences, crimes that otherwise were notorious for going unpunished in Canada.⁶⁵ On the other end of the spectrum, the family man had cemented his position as the pinnacle of respectability. John Gillis argues that in the cultural imagination of the nineteenth and twentieth

⁶⁴ See also Appendix 6 and 7. Considering that soldiers worked small crofts, this puts them on par with crofters' sons at least in this regard.

⁶⁵ Lesley A. Erickson, "A Very Garden of the Lord"? Hired Hands, Farm Women, and Sex Crime Prosecutions on the Prairies, 1914-1929," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 12 (2001): 115-135.

centuries, “family” gained a deep symbolic meaning that gave men’s “careers and public lives its justification and meaning.”⁶⁶ Despite the popular image of the “gay bachelor,” therefore, being single and an immigrant in western Canada was to deviate from the preferred norm, and the realization that immigrants had to sacrifice matrimony to stay in Canada likely took a psychological toll.⁶⁷ This gendered transformation occurred during the height of Långasjö immigration, and must have added incentive to remigration among men whose marital prospects in B.C. were slight.⁶⁸

Male Långasjö workers who became permanent residents in British Columbia were indeed quite likely to spend their lives as bachelors, especially since they were likely to remain labourers (Table 4.13). Of 142 Långasjö men who stayed in British Columbia, 47 percent married and 53 percent remained single all their lives.⁶⁹ If we break down the Långasjö group of permanent B.C. residents into labourers and foremen, clearly the labourers had a much lesser chance of starting families. In comparison, the 1930 conjugal rate among men age twenty-five years and over in Kronoberg county, where the Långasjö parish is situated, was 70.5 percent, while the conjugal rate in Canada

⁶⁶ John Gillis, “Making Time for Family: The Invention of Family Time(s) and the Reinvention of Family History,” *Journal of Family History* 21.1 (January 1996): 14.

⁶⁷ At least one Långasjö immigrant in British Columbia committed suicide because of unfulfilled love. Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 526. For the emotional impact of perpetual bachelorhood among Swedish immigrants in Canada, see Eva St Jean, “En karllakar bland karlar: Brev av ensamhet och trånad från svenska immigranter i Kanada, 1900-1930,” in *Hembygden och världen*, eds. Lars Olsson and Sune Åkerman, 2002.

⁶⁸ The fear of the immigrant male was not restricted to sexuality. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the Canadian government feared that single men, in particularly immigrants, were susceptible to Communist activism. To stem the threat, single men were isolated in work camps where many languished for several years. See Steven Maynard, “Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History,” *Labour/Le Travail* 23 (Spring 1989): 159-69; John Herd Thompson and Alan Seager, *Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord*, (Toronto, 1985); Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years, 1929-1939: Memoirs of Canadians Who Survived the Depression* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1973); and Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915-1946* (Calgary: Fifth house Ltd., 1995).

⁶⁹ The information on marriage given in *En smålandssocken emigrerar* must be considered as reliable. In a spot check of thirty-six Långasjö men reported as single in the study and found in B.C. Vital Statistics, each Death Certificate corresponded with the information in the book.

1931 among English-origin men age twenty-five and older was 75 percent.⁷⁰ According to the Canadian Census, fifty-four percent of Scandinavian men in Canada 1931 entered matrimony.⁷¹ The rate of marriage among Långasjö labourers in B.C. is therefore low even among emigrant groups, and while the rate for foremen is substantially higher, even for the general Scandinavian immigrant population, it is low in comparison to the general conjugal rates in B.C. and in Sweden.⁷² As seen in Chapter Two, men in the lowest socio-economic positions in Långasjö also had a low conjugal rate. In B.C., low-paying jobs, social isolation, a lack of Swedish women, and the difficulty in communicating effectively with Anglo Saxon women created barriers that proved difficult to overcome.

Table 4.13: Marital status of Långasjö men who stayed permanently in B.C.

| | Total | Single | Percent | Married | Percent |
|-----------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| All | 142 | 75 | 53% | 67 | 47% |
| Foremen in BC | 48 | 17 | 35% | 31 | 65% |
| Labourers in BC | 94 | 58 | 62% | 36 | 38% |

Eric Svensson, who eventually returned Långasjö to marry and become a farm owner, remembered his initiation to B.C.:

⁷⁰ Jean Dumas et al claim that the total proportion of never-married of both sexes in Canada never exceeded 11 or 12 percent between the years 1921 and 1991. Jean Dumas ed., *Family over the Life Course* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 1995), 80-81.

⁷¹ Folkräkningen den 31 December 1930, Kungl. Statistiska Centralbyrån, *Folkmängden efter ålder, kön, och civilstånd.*; and Census of Canada, 1931, *Population*, Table 20. This involves men age twenty-five and older.

⁷² This is partly because many of these men worked in the resource industry with its high accident rate: some simply never lived long enough to enter into marriage. In fact, according to information in *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, twenty-six Långasjö men, neither of whom were married, died from accidents or illness before age 40. The high rate of accidents among loggers in British Columbia is well established and compared to wartime losses of human life; nonetheless, late nineteenth-century contemporaries warned that "logging had become as dangerous as railroading," which suggests that railway work was equally deadly. Gordon Hak, *Turning Trees into Dollars: The British Columbia Coastal Lumber Industry, 1858-1913* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 142. See also Andrew Mason Prouty, *More Deadly than War! Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981* (New York: Garland, 1985). Mining was another industry that often proved deadly to the workers. See Jeremy Mouat, *Roaring Days: Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia.*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), 69-73.

Two of my friends were already in Nicholson, and . . . the next day we started [working]. They spoke English, but we didn't learn anything. Everything they said sounded the same. The first we learned in the strange language was to swear; [which were words] we had no use for. So the days passed in sweat and toil, and then Saturday night came along in Nicholson.

All us friends were to meet in Golden. We were all miserable. We swore over Canada – there weren't even any women here. One can go crazy living like that. Everyone had bought booze and we all got drunk . . .

Once we went to town to dance, but we never did that again. First of all, they [the women] refused to dance with us, and second we couldn't dance their kind of dances. Already in those days they danced that “cow dance” that they do here today.

After a month I went to Moberly. The boss was Gunnar Karlsson from Sibbahult, and Otto Alexandersson from Råamåla worked there as well. It was lonely and quiet with small farms spread out in the bush. Most [farmers] were from northern Sweden and bachelors and there were very few women.⁷³

While men thus felt isolated from female company, Långasjö women had a different experience. The conjugal rate for Långasjö women stands in stark contrast to that of their male friends. Thirty-five or nearly ninety percent of the women married. It is difficult to discern how well this represents the women's own self-image, but the study En smålandssocken emigrerar tended to define women in terms of their relationship to men, either serving in a capacity of a wife or in waged labour providing food and housing for men. “Married” therefore was an occupational title as much as a civil status in a way that was not true of Långasjö men. The conjugal rate among the women was also somewhat higher than for Scandinavian women in total, or, for that matter, Långasjö women who stayed in Sweden. According to Census Canada, 82 percent of Scandinavian women ages 25 and over in B.C. were married, while the corresponding figure for women in Kronoberg county was 74.5 percent. The sample of Långasjö women in B.C. is

⁷³ Johansson, En smålandssocken emigrerar, 885. The sentiments that Eric Svensson expressed were not unique for Långasjö men. In letters to families and friends at home, immigrants from all of Sweden expressed similar sense of isolation, loneliness and alienation in British Columbia. For these heterosexual men the dream of marriage to a Swedish woman became a complex symbol of security, sexuality and self-maturity. See St Jean, “En karllakar! bland karlar”.

very small, and must therefore be treated with caution. Moreover, proportionally more women than men were married prior to emigration: a full third of the women left Sweden together with their husbands.⁷⁴ Still, the marital history of Långasjö single women in B.C. reads differently than that of the single men, and it is clear that the marital prospects for Långasjö women far outweighed that of the Långasjö men.

Ulf Beijbom claims that although Swedish women were desired as marriage partners by American men, the women nonetheless “seldom married outside of the Swedish-American immigrant group.”⁷⁵ But Långasjö women did not necessarily marry men from the home parish. Six women married Swedish men from other regions, and seven married men who were not Swedish. Since men dominated the male/female ratio among Långasjö immigrants in B.C., the numbers suggest that Långasjö women were attractive on the marriage market, and found it much easier to form families in B.C. than did their sisters in Långasjö. Whether this gave the women more societal or sexual power is debatable, but women certainly did not reject the matrimonial offerings that were available in British Columbia.⁷⁶ Occupationally, therefore, women’s lives did not change to any remarkable degree, and but many experienced a cultural and social shift from their lives in Sweden.

If we look at Långasjö male immigrants who wedded, thirteen married non-Swedish women, and six married women who were born in Sweden, but not in Långasjö. None of the men who married non-Swedish or non-Långasjö women returned home. In

⁷⁴ In thirteen cases, women married several years prior to, or the same year as they left Sweden.

⁷⁵ Beijbom, “The Promised Land for Swedish Maids,” 123.

⁷⁶ Adele Perry has argued against the notion that women benefited from gender imbalance in British Columbia. She suggests that while it might be true that “colonial race politics combined to increase white women’s opportunities for heterosexual contact [it restricted] their social options outside the heterosexual nexus. Adele Perry, “‘Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men’: Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 27-43.

her study of intermarriages between different ethnic groups in Canada between 1871 and 1971, Madeleine Richards claims that intermarriages were important for assimilation, in particular intermarriages between new immigrants and women from the two dominant groups, the French and the English.⁷⁷ Similarly, Jay Goldstein and Alexander Segall argue that ethnic intermarriage resulted in “lower levels of both internal and external dimensions of ethnic identity.”⁷⁸ This is evident among Långasjö immigrants, since the only married men who returned home were those who, mostly prior to emigration or during one of the home visits, had married a Långasjö bride. Therefore, the strongest single factor among Långasjö immigrants determining permanent residence in B.C. was to marry outside of the home community.⁷⁹

The importance of matrimony becomes even more evident when looking at the conjugal rate among male remigrants. The majority returned to Sweden as single men, but they also tended to marry the same year or a few years after the return. Overall eighty percent of the remigrants to Sweden married. If we isolate the largest group among the returnees – those who became farm owners upon returning to Sweden – then a full ninety-two percent entered into matrimony, mostly after their return to Sweden. In fact, of eighty-nine remigrants who married, seventy-three did so after returning to Sweden. If the ability to acquire a farm and to marry was a desired goal for the Långasjö migrants, the returnees succeeded both from an economic and personal standpoint. Working for a

⁷⁷ Madeline Richard, *Ethnic Groups and Marital Choices* (1991).

⁷⁸ Jay Goldstein and Alexander Segall, “Ethnic Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 17.3 (1985): 68.

⁷⁹ Canadian assimilation theories have, however, been criticized as overly simplistic due to a cross-sectional rather than life-course research method. Teppo Sintonen argues that although Finnish immigrants at some parts of their working life showed a high degree of assimilation, this process went in ebb-and-flow stages, and at the latter points in life the immigrants sought out Finnish culture and communities. Teppo Sintonen, “Life Course and Ethnicity: Experiences of Canadian Finns who Immigrated to Canada in the 1920s,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 25.3 (1993): 76-89. Single variables such as marriage alone do not therefore necessarily signal assimilation.

few years in B.C., mostly for the Canadian Pacific Railway, greatly increased their chances of advancing socially and economically after the return to Sweden. Moreover, since Långasjö men tended to seek marriage partners among women in the home parish, the high remigration among Långasjö men might have been a result of the unequal sex ratio in British Columbia. John Johansson notes that approximately half of all the returnees had worked primarily in B.C., which is remarkable since they only made up twenty-four percent of the total Långasjö emigration.⁸⁰ It is probable that a combination of having relatively secure employment at the CPR that permitted them to save money, and the relatively low possibility of getting married in B.C. caused more men to remigrate from British Columbia than from the United States. Returning to Sweden did not necessarily signify a rejection of working conditions in B.C., nor a simple desire to farm in Sweden: the desire to start a family was an equally integral part in the remigration decision.

The numbers pertaining to farmers and the marriage rate in Sweden become even more significant when examining the single returnees from British Columbia. Nineteen of the Långasjö men who had worked in B.C. stayed single after the return to Sweden.⁸¹ Most were either incapacitated through illness or accidents while others had passed the prime years for entering into matrimony. Seven Långasjö single remigrants died prematurely, five of them within three years of returning to Sweden. Three of the single returnees were seriously ill or suffering some form of disability; one was described as indigent; one lived out his life as a farmhand on his brother's farm, five were over the age of fifty; and the two healthy farm owners either chose to remain single or had personality

⁸⁰ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 811.

⁸¹ Appendix 6.

or physical attributes that rendered them unattractive to Långasjö women. Few single returnees from B.C. were therefore able to live independent, productive lives in Sweden, either because of physical disabilities or poverty.⁸² Clearly, regardless of what social class they belonged prior to emigrating, entering into marriage was an important step for Långasjö men, and men who emigrated for a few years and retained their health stood a much better chance of matrimony than did those who remained in B.C., or, for that matter, never left Långasjö parish.

Women also returned to Långasjö, but perhaps with different motivations. Among the Långasjö women in British Columbia, seven returned to Sweden. Of those, six were already married to Swedish men and one was single, which she remained all her life. The three women who had married Långasjö men returned to Långasjö, while those who had married Swedes from other parts of Sweden went elsewhere. These women and their husbands did not become farm owners to the same extent as was true for single male remigrants. Only two women bought farms, one in Långasjö parish and one elsewhere in Småland.⁸³ Clearly, the women did not return for the sake of finding a husband, nor does John Johansson's study suggest that they sought farm ownership.⁸⁴

Women who stayed in B.C. generally entered into marriage. Of the four single women in B.C., three died young, and the fourth disappeared from B.C. together with a brother, and their whereabouts and history are unknown. Långasjö women in British

⁸² Fourteen returnees had continued from B.C. to the U.S. before returning to Sweden. Two of those remained single: one died within a year after returning, and the other became a farmer in a neighbouring parish. See Appendix 7 and Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 242.

⁸³ There is no information for two of the women, while one was seventy-seven years old, one bought a croft and the other became grocery store owner, both together with their husbands.

⁸⁴ Women constituted a third of the all Långasjö emigrants, but only one sixth of the remigrants. In comparison, Långasjö male immigrants in B.C. were twenty-one percent of the total Långasjö emigration to North America, but they made up half of the returning stream to the home parish. Johansson, *En smålandsocken emigrerar*, 809.

Columbia also married outside of the ethnic group. Seven women married non-Swedish men, and all these women stayed in Canada.⁸⁵ Thus, the same conclusions regarding ethnic salience and matrimony for men are also true for women: the strongest indicator of becoming a permanent immigrant is to marry outside of the Swedish community. On the other hand, the fact that a large proportion of the very small group of women who emigrated to B.C. was married prior to leaving the country, strengthens Ann-Sofie Källemark's hypothesis that single women had difficulty in finding the necessary means to emigrate.

Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia did not merely have the choice between staying in B.C. or remigrating to Sweden; many left B.C. for the United States. In fact, fifty-six Långasjö male immigrants in B.C. went south, and eventually fourteen of them returned to Sweden. Most of the "continuing migrants" had worked for the railways in B.C.,⁸⁶ but the occupational pattern shifted after immigrating to the United States. The majority were attracted to Washington State (19) and Minnesota (13), but Långasjö immigrants from British Columbia also worked in nine other American states.⁸⁷ Only six of the fifty-five worked for U.S. railways, and overall there was a much more even split between different occupations, even if most tended to stay in labouring positions.⁸⁸ Thus, when Långasjö immigrants left B.C. for the United States they showed less of a tendency to become pigeonholed in a certain occupation, and although the majority were drawn

⁸⁵ One husband was Norwegian and the other six were Anglo-Saxon.

⁸⁶ In all, thirty-two worked for the railway, eight tried several occupations, three worked in sawmills, two in mining, and for seven there are no occupational data. See Database Långasjö.

⁸⁷ These were: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Montana and Oregon.

⁸⁸ The overall marital rate among Långasjö men who left B.C. for the U.S. is higher than the rate for male Långasjö permanent residents in B.C. Of the fifty-six Långasjö men who continued on from B.C. to the U.S., fourteen eventually returned to Sweden. Of the forty-two men who stayed permanently in the U.S., fifty-five percent married (23 men). That is higher than the overall forty-seven percent conjugal rate among Långasjö men staying permanently in B.C.

toward states where they could meet other Långasjö immigrants, many others went to areas that had a relatively low Swedish population.

Table 4.14: Occupation among Långasjö immigrants who migrated from B.C. to the USA.

| Occupation US | |
|---------------|----|
| Total | 56 |
| Railway | 6 |
| Logging | 3 |
| Mining | 4 |
| Sawmill | 5 |
| Craftsman | 6 |
| Farm own | 3 |
| Construction | 2 |
| Self employed | 4 |
| Professional | 1 |
| Factory | 4 |
| Other | 7 |
| N/A | 11 |

The occupational disparities between Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia and in the United States did not, however, result in different strategies for those who returned to Sweden. The number of returnees from the U.S. is smaller but the pattern is still clear. Of the fifty-six Långasjö immigrants who went from B.C. to the U.S., fourteen eventually returned to Sweden. Of those, eight became farmers, two craftsmen, two labourers, one left the Långasjö parish, and one person died shortly after returning. Here, too, the groups who had previous experience in farming tended to become farmers upon remigration, while the most disadvantaged groups found this more difficult.⁸⁹

Emigration changed circumstances on a gendered, social and occupational level. Men and women's emigration movements were structured differently and their separate circumstances guided decisions on matrimony and remigration. Similarly, occupational opportunities changed dramatically, in particular for men who had been guided by their

⁸⁹ Appendix 7.

fathers' occupation in Sweden. There was, however, also an emotional level worth considering. Men from all classes returned to Långasjö in greater numbers than was the case among Långasjö men who emigrated to the United States. Perhaps with the exception of first-born sons, most remigrants returned to Sweden in a much better position than had they not left at all. This is particularly true for men from disadvantaged social groups. But returning to Långasjö did not translate into a magical change in terms of work:

Work was the same as before. [The remigrant] harnessed the oxen in front of the plough, reaped the grass with a scythe, and threshed the rye by hand. He picked up the struggle against rocks in the fields. He cut down trees in the forest as before and sold . . . in Emmaboda or Vissefjärda Those who left before the First World War . . . might have found that some of the bigger farms had pooled together for a combine. But it did not make threshing any easier. Those who had sowed the rye by hand before leaving sometime before 1910, might find upon returning after 1920 that the large farms now used a machine. But he would have been unfamiliar with how to use the big combine and the sowing machine. He might have seen them on the large farms in America, but not worked them himself. No, by and large he picked up where he left eight to ten years earlier. The time in America was a parenthesis, but a long and in many ways a significant parenthesis. It had made him independent.⁹⁰

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Despite the semblance of homogeneity, social stratification in Långasjö affected the life of both those who stayed behind and the emigrants. It was overt and direct for the “twins” who never emigrated, but it still had a diffuse and difficult to pinpoint effect on men and women who moved an ocean away. Returning to the initial question how emigration changed the life and opportunities of the emigrant, it must be addressed on a gendered, social, occupational, and even an emotional level.

Men and women had different experiences and opportunities in Långasjö and British Columbia. Marital status was the strongest social indicator for women in both

⁹⁰ Johansson, *En smålandssocken emigrerar*, 814.

areas. In Långasjö, single women of all groups faced the limited choices of working as farm maids or traveling to nearby urban centres or to further-away agricultural areas for work. Social stratification was clearer when it came to matrimony. Farm daughters were able to bring funds, sometimes even land into the marriage, and thus for them not even single motherhood was a deterrent to finding a spouse; women from non-landed families, however, found it more difficult to start families, and the birth of even one child out of wedlock made this even more so.

In British Columbia, Långasjö women were able to break much of this pattern. Immigrant women, regardless of social belonging, were still relegated to service oriented work, but in the matters of marriage, social background played no discernable role. Women from all groups in Långasjö were able to marry to a much higher rate than their brothers in B.C. or even Långasjö women who never left the parish, and some became important pillars of support in their ethnic community. Långasjö men and women even experienced remigration differently. Remigration of women was much less prevalent, and, contrary to men, they were likely to be accompanied by a spouse. Harald Runblom and Hans Norman argue that Swedish women often worked in domestic situations that were less affected by economic fluctuation than were primary industries, and therefore less likely than men to remigrate.⁹¹ Certainly women had fewer reasons than men to remigrate, since they lacked the social push and economic pull factors that caused some men to return home. Women's low wages prohibited realistic savings toward farm ownership in Sweden making the relationship between land ownership and remigration less apparent for women, and the ease with which they could enter into matrimony in

⁹¹ Harald Runblom and Hans Norman, From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 221.

B.C. removed some of the social impetus of remigration. Women's social status still depended on their husbands, but in B.C. they were less bound to the social status of their parents.

The experience of Långasjö men was somewhat different. Generally speaking, sons who stayed in Långasjö inherited their social and occupational position from their fathers long into the twentieth century. Trades were passed down from father to son, and farmers' sons either became landowners or were better able to go into more financially secure employment than were sons of non-landed families. This occupational tradition was abruptly broken for men who immigrated to British Columbia. Långasjö male immigrants in B.C. rarely worked in similar occupations as their fathers; most entered occupations that were nonexistent in the Långasjö parish. Moreover, the employer that hired most Långasjö men – the Canadian Pacific Railway – cared little about social rules and stratifications in Sweden.

Emigration affected social groups who stayed behind differently. For some groups it presented unexpected gifts of opportunities, while others paid fines of social security and the grief of emotional separation. Many parents saw all of their children leaving the parish, at times to neighbouring district or high-employment areas in Sweden or Denmark; many others went to North America. In the first third of the twentieth century such parents were left without the social security that traditionally was the responsibility of adult children. On the other hand, a great number of first-born sons emigrated from Långasjö. The reason behind their departure is unclear, but the late date of inter vivos transfer by first-born sons in the “twin” sample suggests that first-born sons emigrated in order to escape the farm during the years between adulthood and inheritance.

While the traditional social stratification from Långasjö was disrupted in British Columbia, it was not totally erased. The Swedish background was not important for B.C. employers, but there are subtle hints that suggest that Långasjö men from different social groupings used different employment strategies after immigration. This is evident when examining occupational patterns. Sons from larger farms in Långasjö were less likely to work for the CPR,⁹² and those who did were more likely to leave this employment than were sons of small farmers and landless. One must not lose sight of the fact that railway maintenance work was underpaid and under difficult conditions. It was therefore not the first choice even among immigrants. Still, many Långasjö men were able to use the CPR to advance, and the differences in conjugal rate between CPR foremen and labourers in all industries testify to the degree of social and financial security working as a CPR foreman brought about. Considering that the CPR hired without consideration of old-world social boundaries, the answers to why different groups had different immigration experience must be found among Långasjö immigrants.

There are several possible explanations. Sons from larger farms in Sweden were more likely to have inherited funds, which may have provided the financial security needed to risk leaving one type of employment for another, or enable the gamble of investing in a farm or business. Second, it is possible that farm sons had a stronger aversion to the low pay and unskilled work offered by the CPR. Third, if they had internalized the social divisions from their home parish, some farm sons may have hesitated to work under the authority of a labourer or crofter's son who now had the

⁹² In Group 1, (farm size over ¼ mantal) only 46 percent worked for the CPR; in Group 2 (1/8 to ¼ mantal), 66 percent worked for the CPR; and in Group 3 (less than 1/8 mantal) 77 percent worked in the railways. Among non-landed Långasjö immigrants, no group were lower than 75 percent, with Crofters at top with 90 percent working for B.C. railway companies. Thus, the bigger the farm was in Långasjö the lesser the chance was that the son would work for the railway in British Columbia.

power to hire or fire. The Swedish background in itself did not determine type of occupation since most employment conflicted with their previous experiences. Social opportunities were different in British Columbia, and men from meagre circumstances in Långasjö could to some extent start anew. True, echoes of the old social order reverberated through the Långasjö group even in British Columbia, but not to a significant extent. This is not to suggest that B.C. lacked a social hierarchy. Here as in the rest of the western world, immigrants entered a class system where workers had little control over their environment. But B.C. employers were unable to distinguish the internal stratification in what to them must have seemed like one uniform group. This permitted the social ascent of immigrants who were unlikely to advance had they stayed in Sweden.

Chapter 5: The Myth of the Big Swede Logger¹

This chapter looks at one occupational group among Swedish immigrants, the logger. Both Swedish and Canadian historians have neglected Swedes in Canada, and myths about their politics and proportional place in the labour force remain unchallenged. In the 1920s and 1930s Swedish men in British Columbia were often stereotyped as natural born loggers and many employers considered them to be radicals who instigated and led the formation of unions in the forest industry. The myth of the radical Swedish logger is consistent with western exceptionalism, which held that immigrant workers imported radical ideas from their progressive homeland, and became union organizers, socialists and communists soon after arriving in British Columbia. Considering the strong Swedish involvement in industries other than logging in B.C., and the lack of Swedish leaders in the union movement, this chapter suggests that historians have

exaggerated the Swedish involvement in the industry and in B.C.'s faction of the International Woodworkers of America.

Before the 1920s, 99 percent of Swedish emigrants to North America went to the United States.² In the 1920s, however, concurrent with an increased emigration to Canada, emigration from the forested counties in northern Sweden accelerated.³ At least three-quarters of Swedish emigrants to Canada were young men between 15-29 years of age who exchanged their rural homes for the prairies or for British Columbia.⁴ In the latter province myths emerged regarding their numerical dominance and radical ideologies within the forest industry. Many Anglo Canadians assumed Swedes were born to log and employers viewed them both as exploitable but efficient workers, and as a threat to labour peace. Parallel to these myths was a conception that British and Anglo-Canadian workers were unsuited for logging. As with most legends, herein lies a grain of truth large enough to muddle the separation of the clichéd image of the Big Swede Logger with the lived reality.

The image of the Scandinavian logger was in place as early as the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, in 1920 the British Columbia Lumber Journal revealed that employers considered the prototypical logger to be Scandinavian. Although the journal quoted statistics showing that only 542 of 3 374 employed forest workers (16 percent) in

¹ This chapter is based on a Master of Arts thesis, Eva St.Jean, "The Myth of the Big Swede Logger: An *Arbetskarl* in the Vancouver Island Forests, 1920-1948," (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1999).

² For a closer description of Swedish emigration patterns, see Harald Runblom and Hans Norman, From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976); and Hans Norman and Harold Runblom, Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800 (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian University Press, 1987).

³ For example, Lars-Göran Tedebrand notes that the emigration from the northern district, *Västerbotten*, peaked in 1928 after a disastrous layoff of sawmill workers. See Lars-Göran Tedebrand, "Emigrationen," Västerbotten Emigrationen (1. 87): 14.

⁴ Norman and Runblom, Transatlantic Connections, 156.

1919 were Scandinavians, it declared:⁵ “The average man cannot stand up under the strain and that is why the Swedes, Norwegians and other foreigners, born and bred to this kind of work, are so numerous in the logging camp.”⁶ Likewise, in his reminiscences, the Superintendent of logging at Youbou, J. W. Whittaker, claimed that the “logging camps in those days [the 1930s] were strong on Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns: fallers and buckers. English and Scots in the logging camps were out of the question. They weren’t loggers, that’s all.”⁷ Thus, although the statistics show that Whittaker’s perceptions were exaggerated, Scandinavian and Finnish loggers were clearly conspicuous in logging camps prior to the Second World War.⁸

Later historians have perpetuated these ideas. Donald MacKay, for instance, celebrates the preponderance and natural ability of the Scandinavian logger.

“Scandinavians . . . particularly the Finns and the Swedes, took to the work as if they had been born to it, as indeed many of them were.” He points out that by 1934, “a forester at

⁵ The figures from the Department of Labour only refer to employees from eighty-eight firms in British Columbia. See “Report of the Deputy Minister of Labour for the year ending December 31st, 1919,” B.C. Legislative Assembly, Sessional Papers, Vol. 1, 1920. In 1921, B.C. employed 12 635 persons in logging, out of which 3 431 were European, 1 197 Asian, 1 643 American, 1 872 British, and 4 312 were listed as Canadians. See Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 2, “Occupations of the population 10 years of age and over, classified by birthplace for provinces, 1921.” Although the 1921 census does not record the Scandinavians separately, the 1931 census had a table of occupation by origin that lists 2 181 Scandinavians as logging in Canada. Unfortunately, the 1931 census does not break this figure down to provinces. See Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 7, Table 29, “Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada, 1921.”

⁶ “The Alien Logger,” British Columbia Lumber Journal, Vol. 4 (1920). The figures of the Provincial Department of Labour indicate that a much higher ratio, 35.9 percent, were British or Canadian citizens.

⁷ Sue Baptie, First Growth: The Story of British Columbia Forest Products Ltd (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1975), 144.

⁸ Employers also often expressed frustration with what they considered misguided perceptions of working conditions and union policies in the Swedish forest industry. R. J. Templeton noted that “it is argued that while the closed shop is undemocratic it is necessary to the growth of the labor union movement. But that cannot be. The closed shop is unknown in Britain or in Sweden. And he would be a bold man who would argue that the absence of the closed shop has interfered in any way with the growth of labor unionism in the countries I have named, Britain and Sweden.” British Columbia Lumberman, Vol. 30. 9 (September 1946): 54. A few years later, G. E. Wellburn noted scathingly that “bunkhouses in Swedish logging camps [hold] sixteen double-decker bunks, with two men in a bunk at times. I [cannot] help speculating on the reaction of our loggers if they were offered accommodations of that sort. But we still point to the European finest setup as the epitome of perfection.” British Columbia Lumberman, Vol. 33. 1 (January 1949): 58.

Camp 6 on Cowichan Lake, Vancouver Island, estimated that more than half the loggers there were Finns and Swedes.”⁹ Both Myrtle Bergren and Irene Howard write convincingly of the Swedish and Scandinavian role in forming unions, but since both texts are based on oral testimony it is difficult to compare the Scandinavian participation to other ethnic groups.¹⁰ Richard Rajala notes that “logging engineer Jim Crickmay recalled that Finns and Scandinavians comprised about half the population” in the Cowichan Lake logging camps in 1934.¹¹ Art Ives, in a manuscript that glorifies the old-time loggers of Campbell River, situates the true period of Swedish loggers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “The real breed of loggers,” he claims, “started when the Swedes came over (Norway and Sweden were one country then).”¹² Similarly, without offering any documentation, Robert McDonald also identifies turn-of-the-century Swedes and Norwegians with logging.¹³ By including anecdotal impressions in historical texts without accompanying statistical evidence, myths of Scandinavian immigrants in B.C. become cloaked in a false credibility. Moreover, parallel to the idea of Scandinavian plurality grew a notion that they were radical and militant union supporters.

Historiography covering the political experience of immigrants is contradictory.

In British Columbia, some labour history studies claim that radical immigrants introduced

⁹ Donald McKay, *The Lumberjacks* (Toronto: McGrawHill Ryerson Ltd, 1978), 221.

¹⁰ Myrtle Bergren, *Tough Timber: The Loggers of British Columbia. Their Story* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1966); and Irene Howard, *Vancouver's Svenskar: A History of the Swedish Community in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Vancouver Historical society, 1970). See also Irene Howard, “Vancouver Swedes and the Loggers,” *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, 23 (1970): 163-183.

¹¹ Richard Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge: A Century of the Forest Industry at Cowichan Lake* (Victoria, B.C.: Lake Cowichan Heritage Advisory Committee, 1993), 59.

¹² Arthur Ives, “Timber-r-r! A Glossary of Logging,” A self-published manuscript acquired by the Campbell River archives in May 1998.

¹³ Robert A. J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver 1863-1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 213 and footnote #22. An example of a Vancouver Swede who did not fit this mold was Pete Larson, one of the first Swedes in Vancouver. After “jumping ship” in Victoria in 1887, Larson became a hotel proprietor, eventually owning both the Hotel Norden and the Union Hotel. See Lars Ljungmark and Sune Åkerman, “The Unknown Emigration: Swedes in Canada 1870-1970,” *Arkiv i Norrland* 16 (1998): 106-107.

an exceptional degree of socialism in the province. Ross McCormack and David Bercuson forward the argument of Western Exceptionalism, claiming that immigrants in B.C. pushed the labour movement to the left.¹⁴ These authors believe the western labour movement in the early twentieth century was composed mainly of immigrants who arrived well versed in socialism, and who were guided by this ideology when confronted with B.C.'s distinctive labour market.¹⁵

In his studies of the International Woodworkers of America, Jerry Lembcke leans on this theory as an explanatory tool for union formation among loggers. He attaches great significance to the role of Scandinavians, and singles out Swedes both politically and numerically. He emphasizes that ideologies of immigrant families guided labour radicals in the 1930s and rejects claims that immigrants had a conservative influence.¹⁶ By referring to and quoting a text from 1930, John Lindberg's Background of Swedish Emigration,¹⁷ Lembcke suggests that Swedes in particular arrived in British Columbia with a radical background:

After 1890, Swedish immigrants were increasingly from industrial origins. The Swedish working class movement was influenced by Marxist theory and 'displayed a corresponding aversion to the capitalistic form of society.' Swedish

¹⁴ McCormack assumes that radicalism was a political anomaly that emerged from special frontier conditions, and that radical British immigrants fueled discontent among western workers. A. Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 15. David Bercuson argues that the immigrants' radical ideologies erupted when B.C.'s particular frontier society trapped workers in closed, polarized societies. David Jay Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier: 1897-1919," The Canadian Historical Review 68.2 (June 1977): 154-175.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, Gordon Hak and Allan Seager claim that socialism made deep impressions in small towns with diverse economies. Hak also argues that the small-town middle class played a significant role in the socialist movement. Thus, people turned to socialism for more complex reasons than what the western exceptionalism theory allows. See Allen Seager, "Socialists and Workers: The Western Canadian Coal Miners, 1900-21," Labour/Le Travail, 16 (Fall 1985): 52, and Gordon Hak, "The Socialist and Labourist Impulse in Small-Town British Columbia: Port Alberni and Prince George, 1911-33," Canadian Historical Review, 70.4 (1989): 519-542.

¹⁶ Jerry Lembcke, "The International Woodworkers of America: An Internal Comparative Study of Two regions" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1978), 23.

¹⁷ John Lindberg, Background of Swedish Emigration in the United States (1930, reprint, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1971).

capitalism, like capitalism everywhere in the late nineteenth century, was seeking expansion through imperialism, placing demands for compulsory military service on its working class. This, coupled with the general social instability inherent in capitalism, encouraged the emigration of class conscious Swedish workers.¹⁸

Since Swedish immigration to British Columbia mostly occurred after 1900, it follows that they, too, were largely “class conscious.”¹⁹

It is nevertheless possible to interpret John Lindberg’s argument differently. Even the sentence that Lembcke quotes and paraphrases is cast in a different light when read in its entirety. Lindberg notes, “The labor movement was *at least theoretically* under the influence of the doctrines of Marx, and displayed a corresponding aversion to the capitalistic form of society, of which America was considered the prototype” (my emphasis).²⁰ The word “theoretically” implies a doubt about the extent of Marxism, and the rest of Lindberg’s argument is even more damaging to Lembcke’s claim.²¹ In fact, he suggests that socialists *avoided* emigrating, since “conditions in America” were not especially attractive to them.²² Lindberg even argues that the workers who *disliked* trade unionism were most likely to emigrate:

¹⁸ Lembcke, “The International Woodworkers of America: An Internal Comparative Study,” 249.

¹⁹ Lembcke extends his dissertation argument regarding the Swedish influence in at least two published works. See Jerry Lembcke, “The International Woodworkers of America in British Columbia, 1942-1951,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 6 (Autumn 1980): 115, and Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing co. Ltd., 1984), 6-11.

²⁰ Lindberg, *Background of Swedish Emigration*, 207.

²¹ Later historians believe Lindberg exaggerated the trade union’s aversion against emigration. Fred Nilsson, for example, suggests that although the Swedish labour movement never viewed the United States as a “promised land” for workers, its leaders were pragmatic and recognized that economic necessity forced some Swedes to emigrate. See Fred Nilsson, *Emigrationen från Stockholm till Nordamerika 1880-1893. En studie i urban utvandring* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1970), 230-232. Lars-Göran Tedebrand points out that although Swedish socialists disliked the American social system, they viewed its work situation as “a realistic and attractive alternative to a depressed Swedish labor market.” Lars-Göran Tedebrand, “Strikes and Political Radicalism in Sweden and Emigration to the United States,” *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* (1983): 201.

²² Lindberg, *Background of Swedish Emigration*, 210.

For the most part the present [1920s] emigration is composed of youths with a certain amount of education, who often are out of sympathy with the trades-union movement. In proportion as these general observations are correct, they should tend to prove that at present emigration affects persons not affiliated with the labor movement, and only to a minor degree influences members of the trades unions.²³

Lindberg believed that, during the peak period of Swedish immigration to B.C., class conscious Swedes remained in Sweden, while those who emigrated did so in part to avoid trade unionism.²⁴

The history of Swedish immigrants in the United States tends to confirm Lindberg's interpretation. Swedish historians agree that most Swedish Americans supported right of centre American organizations. The majority of the otherwise sober and pious Swedes in Worcester, for instance, resented the International Order of the Good Templars (IOGT), a temperance movement with deep roots in the social democratic movement in Sweden.²⁵ These Swedes emigrated from politically active areas in Sweden but remained politically aloof in Worcester, and there are no signs they created any viable working class organizations.²⁶ Even studies that focus on leftwing Swedish Americans usually note that the radicals were a minority.²⁷ In a sweeping study of Swedish radicals in Chicago, Per Nordahl admits that it is "fair to say that the

²³ Lindberg, Background of Swedish Emigration, 210-211, footnote #11.

²⁴ He cautions, however, against concluding that most Swedes emigrated because of disenchantment with the labour movement. "Although it is not uncommon to meet emigrants who allege the 'tyranny' of the trades unions as the cause of their emigration, it is not advisable to generalize, either as to the prevalence of this oppression as a cause of emigration, or as to the extent to which it is merely a rationalization arrived at after subsequent reflection." Lindberg, Background of Swedish Emigration, 210.

²⁵ Roy Rosenzweig, Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 114-115. See also pp. 19-20 and 88.

²⁶ Sune Åkerman and Hans Norman, "Political Mobilization of the Workers: The Case of the Worcester Swedes," in American Labor and Immigration History 1877-1920s, ed. Dirk Hoerder (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 235-258.

²⁷ Accounts of Swedish radicals in America are typically defensive, proclaiming that not all Swedes were conservatives. For such an account see, Nels Hokanson, "Swedes and the I.W.W.," Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly 23 (1972): 25-35.

Republican Party represented the political perspective of the majority of the Swedes.”²⁸

Likewise, the Swedish socialist Henry Bengston noted dryly that “the Swedish-American worker . . . was not particularly prone to digesting commentaries on the classic tenets of the socialist movement.” Therefore, as editor of *Svenska Socialisten* (1912-20), Bengston avoided commentaries that might offend a large number of conservative readers. Despite criticism from hard-liners on the left, he limited his polemic to “discussion-oriented articles and advisory pieces on issues that dealt with [the workers’] own daily struggle for existence.”²⁹

It is clear that Jerry Lembcke also misinterpreted the degree of radicalism within the Swedish union movement in general and the Swedish forest union in particular. Swedish immigration in B.C. coincided with increased migration from the northern provinces in Sweden where the main industries were agriculture and forestry.³⁰ His claim that after the 1890s Swedish emigrants were particularly class conscious and “influenced by Marxist theory”³¹ ignores the social and political diversity that hampered union development in the Swedish logging industry. In order to judge Swedish loggers’ involvement in the B.C. woodworkers’ union and to determine whether a political

²⁸ Per Nordahl, *Weaving the Ethnic Fabric: Social Networks Among Swedish-American Radicals in Chicago, 1890-1940* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 67. For an example of an article on non-socialist Swedes in Chicago, see Eric. R. Lund, “Swedish-American Politics and Press Response: The Chicago Mayoral Election of 1915,” in *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930*, ed. Harald Runblom (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 296-306.

²⁹ Kermit B. Westerberg, “Henry Bengston and Swedish-American Socialism in Chicago,” in *Swedish-American Life in Chicago Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930*, ed. Harald Runblom (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 229

³⁰ In 1939 the Swedish language Vancouver publication, *Nya Svenska Pressen* suggested that most Swedes in Vancouver were from northern Sweden. *Nya Svenska Pressen*, Oct 5, 1935.

³¹ Lembcke, “The International Woodworkers of America: An Internal Comparative Study,” 249.

education at home resulted in radicalism abroad, it is necessary to understand the political and social climate of the Swedish forest industry.³²

Although the Swedish union movement engaged in many militant actions during the first part of the century, it generally avoided radical ideologies and rather concentrated on pragmatic and economic goals.³³ The political focus was cautious, perhaps illustrating a resistance against political engagement. Lars Trädgårdh maintains that Swedish social democracy emerged from a previous culture of *folk* movements. He argues that social democracy only gained popular support after the party severed “its already tenuous links with marxist ideology” and considered the “middling classes.” Accordingly, in 1929 it shifted its vocabulary from class to *folk*, which accounted for its success in the 1932 election. Trädgårdh claims further that both Marxist and Anglo-American attempts to understand the Swedish model have failed, and that “the ideology underpinning the Swedish welfare state is ‘invisible’ in terms of either liberal or Marxist vocabularies.”³⁴

³² Swedish historians have produced several detailed studies from the years of union formation in the Swedish logging industry. These cover labour processes, union formation, and social and economic relationships. Among the most comprehensive are Jonny Hjelm, *Skogsarbetarna och motorsågen. En studie av arbetsliv och teknisk förändring* (Lund, Sweden: Arkiv avhandlingsserie 35, 1991); Bo Persson, *Skogens skördemän. Skogs- och flottningsarbetareförbundets kamp för arbete och kollektivavtal 1918-1927* (Lund, Sweden: Arkiv, 1991); Ella Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner. Maskulinitet och modernitet i norrländskt skogsarbete* (Kristianstad, Sweden: Kristianstads Boktryckeri AB, 1994); and Torvald Karlbom, *Skogens arbetare. Till minnet av Svenska skogsarbetarförbundets 50-åriga verksamhet 1918-1968* (Stockholm: Tiden-Barnängen Tryckerier AB, 1968).

³³ English-language texts of the Swedish union movement include, James Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers, and the State: Conflict and Co-operation in Britain and Sweden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Göran Therborn, “A Unique Chapter in the History of Democracy: the Social Democrats in Sweden,” in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klaus Misgeld et al (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 1-34; and Klas Åmark, “Social Democracy and the Trade Union Movement: Solidarity and the Politics of Self-Interest,” in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klaus Misgeld et al (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 67-96.

³⁴ Lars Trädgårdh, “Varieties of Volkish Ideologies: Sweden and Germany, 1848-1933,” *Language and the Construction of Class Identities*, ed. B Stråth (Göteborg, Sweden, 1990), 27, 42-43 and 47.

While the Swedish working class generally unionized to a high degree, the forest industry differed from this pattern. Unions appeared in the logging industry after the turn of the century, and the Swedish Sawmill-Industry Workers' Association³⁵ was the first to organize the loggers.³⁶ This union eventually grew strong among sawmill workers but disappeared in the logging industry.³⁷ Other organizations, such as the syndicalist Swedish Workers Central Organization (SAC, 1910) and the Swedish Union of Forest Workers and River Drivers (1918) gained wider support among the forest workers.³⁸ The latter prevailed as the loggers' union but waited until 1921 to join the powerful Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions, LO. Even after this merger, the union struggled equally against internal dissension and resistance from the companies.³⁹

Class and ideological divisions among the workers counteracted both union organization and a transition from individual contracts to collective bargaining. Before the transfer of ownership of much of Sweden's northern forests to large corporations, independent farmers had owned and logged most of the timber.⁴⁰ Long into the twentieth

³⁵ *Sågverksindustriarbetareförbundet*.

³⁶ Ronny Ambjörnson, *Den Skötsamme Arbetaren: Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverkssamhälle 1880-1930* (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 1988), 102. Several other independent loggers' unions were also active in the early twentieth century; however, they did not survive the widespread strike in 1909. See *Skogsarbetarrörelsen: Dokument belysande dess bakgrund, tillkomst och verksamhet* (no author). Prepared for Swedish Union of Forest Workers and River Drivers for its 30th Anniversary (Stockholm: Nordisk Rotogravyr, 1948), 47-49.

³⁷ Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 37. Union records show that some sawmill workers attempted to organize loggers as early as 1899. See *Skogsarbetarrörelsen*, 37.

³⁸ *Sveriges arbetares centralorganisation and Skogs- och flottnings-arbetareförbundet*.

³⁹ Many conservative farmers resisted joining LO since it encouraged collective agreements. LO also initially supported the Sawmill Industrial Workers as the industrial union to represent loggers, thereby offending loggers who insisted on a separate organ. See Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 39 and 161, and Karlbom, *Skogens arbetare*, 68.

⁴⁰ Einar Kilander maintains that corporations in the northwest, *Västernorrland*, owned 47 percent of the forests, private persons 44 percent, and the crown 9 percent. Einar Kilander, *Skogsarbetarna organiserar sig. Minnen från 1920- och 30-talet i Västerbotten* (Bjåsta, Sweden: Cewe Förlaget, 1987), 9. Ella Johansson gives a detailed account of the change of ownership in the northern forests, and notes that it is debatable whether the Swedish forests benefit better when owned by individual farmers or by corporations. See Johansson, *Skogarnas Fria Söner*, 25-26.

century farmers remained as subcontractors who hired, fired, and paid the fallers.⁴¹ The farmers typically ran modest operations, seldom hiring more than two or three fallers who worked small areas during the four-month season.⁴² Since only farmers could afford to own horses, they assumed a prestigious role as drivers who negotiated contracts with the companies and often hired sons, neighbours or landless migrant workers to cut the timber. A wide social gulf separated these better-off farmers from the landless and often indigent men who cut the trees.

A deep sense of frustration over difficulties in reaching the workers physically and intellectually also plagued the union movement. Climate and geography isolated loggers who worked far from populated areas during the season of deepest snow cover and lowest temperatures. This made it nearly impossible for organizers to reach the men with the message to unite. Moreover, the loggers were not always willing to listen to struggling organizers who arrived in camp. When Fredrik Wilhelm Thorsson, later the finance minister for the first Social Democratic government, traveled 2 792 kilometres in a 42-day organizing tour, he despaired both over physical difficulties and the apathy he encountered:

These workers stay in one district one year and the next year they might reside a hundred kilometres away. It is not the easiest task, either for great or small generals in our army, to try and unite these people. The worker from the north has a difficult time comprehending new ideas that are offered him. I declare that of all workers among whom I have agitated there are few as conscience ridden as the northerners. The religious sects here are so well represented that for every workplace with three to four hundred workers there are a Waldenströmsk, a Baptist, and a Methodist church, not to mention the establishment of the Salvation Army. . . . Thus, when the workers' bellies are burning they read

⁴¹ Not until the Forest Workers had enforced collective bargaining did this system dissolve. See Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 27.

⁴² *Skogsarbetarrörelsen*, 78. The use of horses and sleighs limited logging to four months during winter. This created a problem for the union both in keeping their locals functioning during off-season and in meeting the members' diverse needs. See Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 92-93

their Lord's Prayer and wait patiently for deliverance. The capitalists delight over these religious workers' obliging nature, and harness them together with unbelievers to the same wagon so that they pull the same load while the fruits of their struggles go to the capitalists' coffers.⁴³

Thorson's lament indicates that old traditions and ingrained religious fears and beliefs impeded organization. Apparently workers did not fear retaliation from the company so much as they distrusted the new ideology the union espoused. Gottfrid Wikgren notes that even in the late 1920s the organizers had difficulty overcoming these obstacles. Even if they reached the camp, the Lutheran church's defense of a hierarchical social system caused many *Norrbottnen* workers to distrust the union.⁴⁴ Clearly, cultural values and internal structure of the workforce deterred union development, and long distances in a harsh climate complicated the organizers' already onerous task of uniting the Swedish loggers.⁴⁵

A social and intellectual distance between zealous organizers and conservative farmers also acted as a deterrent against an effective union. Ella Johansson maintains that Swedish industrial workers in general nursed a well-articulated hatred towards farmers whom they considered ignorant, arrogant, and politically retrogressive. The intellectual unionists in particular railed against the "endless stupidity of the uneducated farmers." One declared angrily that these tillers of the soil "had no other thought than to sow and harvest. Socially they were analphabets. They could not imagine that there existed people who were worse off than they were. Who had nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep. No, socially the farmers were illiterate, they were social analphabets."⁴⁶ In

⁴³ Karlbom, *Skogens arbetare*, 56-61.

⁴⁴ Gottfrid Wikgren, "Skogsarbetarliv och den fackliga organisationen i Överkalix," *Norrbottnen berättar* (Norrbottnens Bildningsförbund, Sweden, 1974), 183-184.

⁴⁵ Einar Kilander, who worked as an organizer during the 1920s and 1930s claims that it was not until the late 1930s that unions started to gain ground in the north. Kilander, *Skogsarbetarna organiserar sig*, 8.

⁴⁶ Johansson, *Skogarnas Fria Söner*, 116.

another instance a farmer responded to a journalist's question about union organization by indicating that he saw himself as an independent businessman, not a team worker in a common labour force. "What good would such an organization do? . . . Does anyone believe that they can all of a sudden change the situation? I don't think so. . . . We farmers can never stick together as workers, but perhaps as businessmen, and then it will not be the little guys whose word will be heard."⁴⁷ This is the rhetoric of an independent commodity producer, not that of a person viewing himself as a proletarian.⁴⁸ The union's difficulties in trying to organize the loggers were by no means limited to actions by logging companies, but also stemmed from a political stagnation among those who for ideological or religious reasons resisted the advance of the union movement.

Besides cultural variances, a fundamental political division among the loggers stumped and delayed the union. Although some farmers did join the Forest Workers and River Drivers,⁴⁹ many others resisted, and in 1923 a few farmers created the Central Organization for Freedom of Work.⁵⁰ This peculiar group united and aided strikebreakers in the Swedish logging industry and organized into local, district, and national assemblies. Believing that no one had the right to interfere in workers' or employers' freedom to work, they actively resisted the syndicalists and the Forest Workers and River Drivers' union. Not surprisingly, both employers and the

⁴⁷ Skogsarbetarrörelsen, 218.

⁴⁸ John Belshaw records a similar sentiment held by the skilled British miners on Vancouver Island who saw themselves as a 'labour aristocracy.' Belshaw maintains that these miners displayed strong conservative values before harsh labour conditions promoted more radical politics. Belshaw, "The British Collier in British Columbia: An Other Archetype Reconsidered," Labour/Le Travail 34 (Fall 1994): 14, 19-23.

⁴⁹ Farmers comprised 55 percent of the union membership in the middle of the 1920s. This is a clear example of the confused political adherence within the logging industry since only a fraction of the workers belonged to the union. See Persson, Skogens skördemän, 40-4.

⁵⁰ [Arbetets frihet] Karlbom, Skogens arbetare, 228. Kilander, however, claims that most of the small farmers shunned Arbetets Frihet while the big farmers found the organization more interesting. Kilander, Skogsarbetarna organiserar sig, 65.

Conservative Party supported the Freedom of Work, and right-wing parliamentarians claimed it defended an ancient Swedish freedom to work which was threatened by “anti-freedom socialistic dogmas” that were foreign to Swedish thinking.⁵¹ The association reached its peak in the mid-twenties with 10 000 members among the loggers,⁵² but although it was active into the 1930’s, the Freedom of Work steadily lost members, and, after 1938, disappeared.⁵³ Nevertheless, it was in its most active phase at the height of Swedish emigration to British Columbia and probably influenced at least some emigrants.

Depending on where in the fluctuating economy the British Columbia forest industry found itself, Swedes could either gain or lose by these conceptions. The two opposing myths regarding Scandinavian and Canadian suitability as employees made it relatively easy even for very young and inexperienced Swedes to gain employment. The image was strong enough that Swedes with other occupational backgrounds found a corresponding difficulty in finding employment within their chosen field. For instance, a male Swedish schoolteacher who arrived in British Columbia in the late 1920s could not find work within the educational system; however, despite a total lack of experience he was hired by a logging company.⁵⁴

“Anders Anderson” tells a similar story. He emigrated in 1925 after reading about Canada’s advances in agricultural technology. Anders, who grew up in the relatively mild climate of southern Sweden, first worked as a farmhand in Saskatchewan. The cold winters, however, compelled him to migrate west. “I read about Canada that instead of *walking* behind the [farm] implements, you *ride* behind the implements, and I said: ‘Gee,

⁵¹ Karlbom, *Skogens arbetare*, 231. Clearly, conservative forces both in B.C. and in Sweden tended to blame foreign influence for workers’ unrest rather than conceding that native industrial practices may be at fault.

⁵² Persson, *Skogens skördemän*, 38.

that's the life for me.' So that's what I wanted to do, and I would have stayed there [in Saskatchewan] too if it hadn't been so cold there."⁵⁵ Instead, Anders caught a train to British Columbia, and found work on a Vancouver Island farm for \$25.00 a month. Later, although he claims that he "didn't know anything about logging in those days," a local logging camp took him on as a rigger. Here he made as much money in a week as he did in a month on the farm.

Anders worked as a rigger rather than faller, which eventually gave rise to comments:

And there were lots of Scandinavians, Finns and Swedes and all that, falling timber. By hand, you know. So someone told me, 'Why don't you do like the rest of the Swedes, and go falling timber too?' So there was a chance there, and there was a fellow who wasn't Scandinavian, but I got to know him, and he said, 'Well, if you want a change come with me, because I need a faller'. . . . But there was no Canadians. Well, maybe one or two Canadians among all those fallers and buckers out there. The rest were just Swedes and Swede-Finns, and Finnish people.⁵⁶

Consequently, Anders was hired as a faller not because of his experience, but more because he was Swedish, and thus *should* be a faller. This suggests that ethnic ability is a constructed concept, more indicative of the perceptions of the ones who did the hiring than of the workers.

How closely connected to reality was the assumption that only Swedes, Norwegians and Finns were capable of cutting down the West Coast rainforests? That depends on what logging company one examines. According to the census, 24.3 percent of the total workforce in the logging industry was Scandinavian, but they clearly congregated in some camps and were absent in others. A list of workers at the Rock Bay Camp near

⁵³ Karlbom, *Skogens arbetare*, 235.

⁵⁴ Fritjof Fågelstad [pseud.], interview with author, North Vancouver, 1998.

⁵⁵ Anders Anderson [pseud.], interview, with author, Vancouver Island, 1998.

Campbell River indicates that over 30 percent of its employees had Scandinavian names.⁵⁷ Unfortunately it does not show their separate employment positions.

The surviving records of the logging companies reveal a mixed pattern. Some hired according to “Anders’” recollections in the quote above, while others were more interested in Anglo-Canadian workers. One company, Baikie Brothers, seemed to have avoided foreign labour altogether. Payroll documents between 1936 and 1946 show a negligible number of Scandinavian employees. In 1936, the company employed eight to eighteen men, the great majority seemingly of an Anglo-Canadian heritage. In August 1936, for example, seventeen men were on the payroll, but only one, Jim Dalquist, was identifiably Scandinavian.⁵⁸ Between September and December that year they recorded no Scandinavian names at all, although through most of 1937 they employed two men with Scandinavian names. Between 1939 and 1946 Baikie Brothers continued to employ fewer than twenty loggers per month, none with Scandinavian names.

The lack of Scandinavian loggers corresponds with at least one personal account from this period. Fred Halstrom remembers with horror the loneliness of his first year as a logger in Shoal Bay: “Nineteen years old. You didn’t know nothing; you couldn’t talk. You’d lie there in the bunkhouse, the guys gabbing away, you wouldn’t know what they were talking about. You had to fend for yourself. No one to teach you nothing.”⁵⁹

Martin Johansson had a similar experience. In over 100 letters home to his family in Sweden, Martin expands on B.C. working conditions. While Martin had some

⁵⁶ See Anders Anderson [pseud.], interview.

⁵⁷ Of 149 workers, 45 had Scandinavian names. H.P., Box 1.

⁵⁸ Most names are without question Anglo-Saxon, for instance, Scott, Picket, Piercy, Wallace, Harper, and Baikie. Likewise, in December of 1939 they hired Piercy, Fidiekin[?], Calman, Murray, Picket, Pickles, Guidlion, Calman, Corrizal, Piercy, Harrigan, Dowcette, Hoglo, Pickley, Muckle, Tipper, and Shaw.

⁵⁹ Fred Halstrom, interview with Marshall Beck, transcript A-170, May 8 1989, Campbell River Museum and Archives (hereon CRMA).

experience of logging in Sweden, he despaired over the difficulties he encountered logging in Houston, B.C., 1929:

Well, there's a difference between Sweden & 'Tieish' Columbia. If one could find another job one would leave immediately because harder work than here is not to be found on God's black earth. If one could cut 20-25 ties a day it would be ok, but that is not possible. Forests like this I have never seen before. I did cut 20 ties today, but I worked harder than I ever have done in Sweden, & then I still hadn't pulled the devils together. Pardon me.⁶⁰

Johansson thus worked in the hard-hit interior logging during the early days of the Depression. Although he was struggling to find work, scared off by the high accident rate, Johansson declined logging on Vancouver Island:

One can for certain find work in the forest here and on Vancouver Island. But the trees are giants and as wide around as the kitchen at home in Harvered. And the work is mortally dangerous out here.⁶¹

As did, Fred Halstrom, Martin also complained over a sense of loneliness and alienation in the camps:

Now I shall describe Christmas. We arrived in a camp 17 miles away from the railroad. Old bearded men, mostly Frenchmen & the odd Swede. Not a sign of Christmas, [and] they [the crew] lie in their old beds staring up to the ceiling like some jailbirds. Then the dinner bell sounds. We storm to the cookhouse in the hope of getting a bit better food [since it's] Christmas Eve. No thank you, worse food than I got there you have to search for. Potatoes that had been on the stove for so long that they had turned sour, meat that was too tough for my poor teeth to chew, a bit of xxxxx [?] for desert & after to sit and look at old sour clothes & old men & smell the shit & the wet clothes & horses until it was time for bed.⁶²

The words of Fred Halstrom and Martin Johansson hardly reflect a labour force dominated by Scandinavians, but rather indicate that Swedish loggers were in a minority position in at least some camps.

⁶⁰ Eva St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land: The Ambiguous Radicalization of an Immigrant Worker in Western Canada, 1928-1934." *Labour/Le Travail* 53 (Spring 2004): 208-209.

⁶¹ St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land," 210.

Clearly, different companies used different criteria in the hiring process. The much larger Elk River Timber (ERT), also of Campbell River, employed more than 700 men per year between 1936 and 1940.⁶³ In 1936, only 85 employees —11 percent of the total labour force — were Scandinavian, and even if 28 of those were fallers, the other 57 Scandinavians held many other positions. A fuller picture emerges when looking at the total numbers of employees at the ERT. The records reveal that the majority of the fallers were not Scandinavian. In 1936, the payroll listed 147 fallers, of whom 120 had typically non-Scandinavian names.⁶⁴ The 1940 records do not change these proportions to any notable degree.⁶⁵ These records thus question the myth that most Vancouver Island fallers were Scandinavian, and, conversely, that most Scandinavians were fallers.⁶⁶ Here, the Scandinavians were in minority both in the labour force in general and among the fallers and buckers. Even when isolating the Scandinavian loggers it is clear that a majority worked in positions other than falling and bucking. In fact, Scandinavians at ERT showed similar occupational diversity to most nationalities.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, one company fully believed in hiring Scandinavian and Finnish loggers as fallers, placing other nationalities in both more skilled and less demanding

⁶² St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land," 216.

⁶³ Timecards, Elk River Timber, CRMA. See Appendix 9a and b.

⁶⁴ Although at least twenty-six names were Anglo-Canadian, most seem East European. Appendix 9a.

⁶⁵ In 1936, 18 percent of the fallers were Scandinavian, and this figure increased to 27 percent in 1940. In 1940, 154 of 210 fallers were from countries other than Scandinavia. Appendix 9b.

⁶⁶ The premise that most Scandinavians were fallers and most fallers were Scandinavian is sometimes extended to suggest that since Scandinavians were radicals and most fallers were Scandinavians, then the fallers were radicals who started the union. Irene Howard, for example, writes that union organizers "headed straight for the fallers' bunkhouse because that was where the Swedes were." See Howard, "Vancouver Swedes and the Loggers," 172-173. Nevertheless, an American blacklist from 1935 naming over 900 employees shows that most "undesirable" loggers worked elsewhere than in falling. See, "Reported as Undesirable Employees," Henry Fabbe's personal archive, University of Washington, Special Collection.

⁶⁷ For example, of the total 776 employees of all nationalities hired by ERT in 1936, 9.5 percent were employed as chokermen. Of the smaller Scandinavian workforce at ERT, 8.3 percent worked in this

position. When Comox Logging compiled a list of their employees' national origin in 1944 the total crew of 794 workers represented 23 different nationalities. Of them, 44 were Swedish and 23 were naturalized Canadians born in Sweden. In total, Swedes comprised 8.4 percent, and Finns 9 percent of the workforce, while the larger group of Scandinavians made up an only slightly higher number of 10 percent.⁶⁸ This picture changes when studying the ethnic origins of fallers: here, 47.4 percent were Finnish, 37.2 Scandinavian and 8.7 percent Canadian, with the remaining 6.7 percent being of other nationalities.⁶⁹ Finnish and Swedish loggers were thus over-represented as fallers, and almost non-existent in other capacities at Comox Logging.⁷⁰ Most likely the immediate intent with the employment records in the three companies mentioned above — Baikie Brothers, Elk River Timber, and Comox Logging — was to provide the management with a clear overview of the numbers of employees in various positions. Whether the resulting employment pattern was intentional or unintentional, it was the camp that provided the most detailed information about the employees' ethnic origin that also hired according to stereotypical images of ethnic ability.⁷¹ One possible hypothesis is that Swedes in Comox Logging used a similar ethnic hiring pattern as did Långasjö Swedes in the Canadian Pacific Railway, in that Swedish foremen were able to hire fellow Swedes.

position. See Timecards, Elk River Timber, CRMA. For non-Scandinavian employees, see Appendix 10a and b.

⁶⁸ "Employees," Comox Logging and Railway Company, CLR-Series 2, 14/23, Comox Museum and Archives (hereon CMA).

⁶⁹ In 1929, Camp 3 hired 342 workers in various positions. Of those, 22.5 percent were Finnish, 17.2 Swedish, 0.2 Norwegian, 0.002 Danish, 0.007 British, 27.4 Canadian, and 22.5 percent of other nationalities.

⁷⁰ Of 137 fallers, 65 were Finnish, 44 Swedish, 7 Norwegians, 12 Canadians, and 9 were of other nationalities. Canadian and British workers dominated among the less skilled chokermen, but also among higher skilled occupations such as engineers, foremen, cat drivers, and road builders.

⁷¹ For a good discussion on the hidden discourse in employment documents, see Eric Sager, "Employment Contracts in Merchant Shipping: An Argument for Social Science History," *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 49-64.

Whatever the explanation, Comox Logging believed that Finns and Scandinavians were best suited for cutting down the timber, while other forest companies were somewhat less inclined to dismiss the abilities of Canadian and European fallers. Ironically, the belief that Canadians constituted a more “responsible,” less radical element than Scandinavians was also a too hastily drawn conclusion.

Even if many saw Swedes and Scandinavians as useful workers, at times a second myth hindered their employment in the industry. It refers to their political consciousness and perceived propensity for union affairs. As a result, employers who believed “foreigners” to be particularly radical were motivated to avoid employing Swedes and other Scandinavians. This trend was especially strong during the 1930s when an unprecedented number of young Canadians waited out the Great Depression in relief camps.

Correspondence in 1934 between A. J. Dumaresq of a Vancouver employment bureau and R. C. Richardson, manager of Campbell River Timber Co., reveals a plan to avoid hiring foreign loggers. After touring B.C. relief camps, Dumaresq suggested that:

employers make a concerted effort to get as many young Canadians as possible into the logging business. They are resourceful and intelligent and learn quickly and if we cater to them it will be only a matter of a comparatively short time before we shall have a new race of loggers We would be giving employment to our own people . . . and we would replace trouble makers in camps by men who have an interest in the country and who are concerned in making a living rather than in disorganizing industry and upsetting our institutions.⁷²

While Dumaresq never pointed to Scandinavian or other ethnic groups directly, he made clear he believed Canadians would make a superior “new race of loggers;” non-

⁷²A. J. Dumaresq to R.C. Richardson, Campbell River Timber Co., Vancouver, B.C., March 9, 1934, CLR-series 2, Box 7, CMA.

Canadians were less desirable. Likewise, he suggested that troublemakers who disorganized the industry were foreigners with no interest in the country.

Richardson's reply does not survive, but his previous statements suggest he would have favored such a development.⁷³ Moreover, rather than referring to foreigners in general, he singled out Swedish and Finnish loggers. In 1932, Richardson wrote, "much to my satisfaction, we have not one Swede or Fin [sic] working. I thought there was a Swede gang but I find now that we haven't either Swedes or Fins [sic] on the job."⁷⁴ Likewise, the manager of British Columbia Loggers Association, R. V. Stuart, believed it would be advantageous to hire only Canadian labour. Stuart noted that Jimmy Lawson, a member of the Provincial Economic Council, responded enthusiastically when he heard that Stuart had hired "green Canadian labor." In fact, Lawson offered to amend the Minimum Wage Order to permit the logging industry to "employ such labor as apprentices during their training period, from three to six months, at a lower wage than that paid for experienced labor."⁷⁵ By replacing Scandinavian and other European loggers with Canadian born, employers thus hoped to gain a less volatile workforce for a reduced payroll costs.⁷⁶ For whatever reasons, after 1931, many Swedish-born men either returned to Sweden or tried their luck in other provinces. In fact, between 1931 and 1941 Scandinavian loggers decreased both numerically and proportionately in B.C.

⁷³ Clearly, feelings against foreign workers in the forest industry ran high around this time. A. E. Munn, M.P. and owner of a logging company, suggested to the Minister of Immigration that non-British subjects who become labour agitators in the logging camps "should be sent back from whence they came." A.E. Munn to W. A. Gordon, Minister of Immigration, May 4, 1934, Canada, Department of Immigration, Vol. 396, File 563236, British Columbia Archives (hereon BCA).

⁷⁴ R.C. Richardson, Campbell River Timber Co. to Robert Filberg, Comox Logging & Railway, March 9, 1932, CLR-series 2, Box 6, File 13, CMA.

⁷⁵ R. V. Stuart, Secretary-Manager, British Columbia Loggers Association, to R. J. Filberg, Comox Logging & Railway Company, May 19, 1934, CLR-series 2, Box 7, File 12, CMA.

⁷⁶ Such an amendment came into effect a year later when apprentice permits were granted to industries under Minimum Wage legislation. See British Columbia, *Sessional Papers*, 1936 (2nd Session), "British Columbia Department of Labour Report, 1935," (Victoria, BC, 1937): K 12-13.

while they increased in all other Canadian provinces except for Prince Edward Island.⁷⁷

This correspondence indicates that more than economic fluctuations caused Scandinavian loggers to leave the province.

While little is known of the political expression of Swedish immigrants in Canada,⁷⁸ at least some of the Swedes who worked in relief camps during the Depression failed to support protest actions planned by their fellow camp workers. In November 1934, a “special operator” reported that the Workers’ Unity League “flourish[ed] in Camp 226” in Harrison Mills, and that all one heard “talked of in camp now is Russia, Russia from morning till night, and even the steady older men are now turning that way.”⁷⁹ A month later another informer at Camp 226 singled out the Swedes, not for chanting the lyrics of Russian politics, but for cooperating with the camp management. During a period when many relief-camp workers struck to protest government inaction, the writer reported that Camp 226 was divided since striking camp workers struggled to prevent thirty-five Swedes from breaking ranks and going to work.⁸⁰ The document does

⁷⁷ See, Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 49, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada and the provinces, 1931; and Census of Canada, Occupation and Industries, Table 12, Gainfully occupied by occupation and racial origin, 1941.

⁷⁸ While no one has presented a focussed research on Swedish Canadian political expression, Lars Ljungmark claims to have found few signs of political activity among the Swedish community in Manitoba. See Lars Ljungmark, “Swedes in Winnipeg up to 1940s. Inter-Ethnic Relations,” *Swedish Life in American Cities*, ed. Dag Blanck and Harald Runblom (Uppsala, 1991), 71. In a different study, Ljungmark nevertheless shows that Swedes in other areas in Canada “provided a strong base” for such different political organizations as the Social Credit Party in Alberta and the CCF in Saskatchewan. Ljungmark and Åkerman, “The Unknown Emigration,” 121. Another article, however, points to the existence of at least an embryonic radical movement among Swedes in Winnipeg. See Ulf Jonas Bjork, “Swedish Ethnicity and Labor Socialism in the Work of Nils F:son Brown, 1919-1928,” *The Historian*, (Summer 1997), s 759-775.

⁷⁹ “Report from a special operator,” Nov. 4, 1934, Attorney General, Correspondence and Papers, (hereon AttG), GR 0429, Box 21-2, BCA.

⁸⁰ Headquarters, Military District No. 11 to the Commissioner of the B.C. Police, Dec. 10, 1934, AttG, Box 21-3, BCA.

not indicate the number of strikers and the Swedes were the only nationality identified, but it is clear that radicalism in Camp 226 did not originate in the Swedish quarters.⁸¹

Other loggers, as well, claim to have avoided both union business and radical politics in British Columbia. In 1926, “Lennart Linnerud” borrowed his brother’s passport and escaped Swedish military service by emigrating to Canada. He sought out relatives in Vancouver who arranged for him to work in a logging camp in Hope, an area where he remained during his seven-year’s *sojourn* in British Columbia.⁸² While Lennart described the work in the camp as “pleasant,” he abandoned logging when offered a job as section foreman for the Canadian Pacific Railway. He considered the biggest difference between logging in Sweden and in B.C. was the high number of accidents in British Columbia: “They didn’t care about [human] life. They were tender with those who were ill, but didn’t care about loggers who were in accidents.”⁸³ Like loggers in Sweden, Lennart prepared his own meals in the camp, but the quality of the food was superior in Canada.⁸⁴ “It was rich man’s food. We didn’t have to buy it, but we had to

⁸¹ Gordon Hak, however, reports that many Swedes in Prince George supported the Communist Party in the 1930s. Some Swedes were deported after demonstrating against the government’s failure to help relief-camp workers. Gordon Hak, “The Communists and the Unemployed in the Prince George District, 1930-1935,” *BC Studies* 68 (Winter 1985-6): 54, 56-57, and 60-61. Likewise, two Swedish immigrants participated in the 1935 Communist organized On-to-Ottawa Trek. As a young man, “Per Person” and an older Swedish immigrant were responsible for maintaining internal discipline among trekkers as the Regina “riot” broke out. “Person” remembers ripping the red band from their sleeves that marked their position as security officers to prevent the RCMP from targeting them in particular. Per Person [pseud.], interview with author, September 1999.

⁸² In 1933, when Lennart returned to northern Sweden he had earned enough money to buy back his parents’ farm that the bank had repossessed during his absence. Lennart Linnerud [pseud.], interview with author, transcript, Norrbotten, Sweden, 5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p 3. Likewise, a Swede from Campbell River, Ture Krook, rather worked in fishing than in logging since he felt safer on the water. See Ture Krook, interview, transcript A-171, June 15 1989, CRMA.

⁸⁴ The interviewees commonly remarked upon the exceptional quality of the food in Canadian camps. As an example, the first time “Hans Hillgren” arrived for a meal he believed the camp had put up a party. Although he never remembered going hungry in Sweden, the food there was simple. “Pork and beans, anything with barley; for supper we had barley mush. Homemade bread, two or three kinds. We ate lots of homemade bread. Pancakes. Different kinds of pancakes, and potatoes and herring, and other fish. Just about as simple as you can possibly make it.” While Hans conceded that Canadian camps often lacked hot water and showers, such commodities were uncommon in Sweden as well. Hans Hillgren [pseud.]

prepare it ourselves. Steak, pies, beef, fruits and more. And during these years Sweden was still an undeveloped country.” Swedes, he said, enjoyed it in British Columbia. As for the union, Lennart remembers hearing it discussed, but claims that most workers remained aloof. While he recognized that the camps contained many communists and anarchists of both Swedish and English origin, no one dared to establish a union.⁸⁵ Thus, although some loggers campaigned for greater militancy, Lennart and most of his Swedish friends in British Columbia avoided attempts to organize the camps.

Even active communists and union organizers admitted that it was at times difficult to rouse Swedish loggers.⁸⁶ For “Kjell Kellerud,” who had frequented Communist Party meetings since his childhood in Sweden and was an active member in the Swedish forest union, labour organizations and political radicalism were familiar concepts.⁸⁷ But when he arrived in the East Kootenays in 1928 there was no organization to protect the loggers’ interests. The crews he worked with were predominantly Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian. He remembers that while most men bemoaned working conditions, they avoided any involvement in union activities because of possible retaliation from the employer:

One day a German started to talk union, saying we should get organized. That was before Christmas in 1929. So he started to talk union, and the men all

interview with author, Vancouver Island, 1998. See also Kilander who claims that especially loggers who did not own land fared poorly. Meat hardly ever appeared on the table since hunting was restricted through licensing, and butter was restricted to a daily ration of one pat per person. Herring, porridge, potatoes, and skimmed milk was the common fare, while wild berries provided some dietary change. See Kilander, *Skogsarbetarna organiserar sig*, 164-65.

⁸⁵ Linnerud [pseud.], interview, 1998.

⁸⁶ Likewise, the most famous organizer in the B.C. woods, Hjalmar Bergren, remembered that it was a long drawn-out and often discouraging process trying to convince his co-workers to sign up with the LWIU. He remembered that crews of 200 or more would listen, but refuse to sign up. According to the census, nearly 25 percent of those men were Scandinavian. See, Hjalmar Bergren, “History notes,” 2-3. Harold Pritchett —IWA, District Council No. 1, Papers. University of British Columbia. Special Collections (hereon HP), UBC SC, Box 7.

⁸⁷ Kjell Kellerud [pseud.], interview with author, Vancouver Island, 1998.

disappeared. After a while there were only the two of us sitting down. They were scared of the union. You couldn't organize a union there.⁸⁸

Clearly, at least in the interior, Swedes and other Scandinavians hesitated to become involved in building a union. Their involvement in the coastal region is better documented, but although union statistics and Canadian Census provide vital information about the Scandinavian participation they also present problems of method and definition.

The census, for instance, gathers Scandinavians under one category in the occupational tables, making it difficult to single out Swedes. This study therefore bases the comparison between the workforce and the union participation on a Scandinavian rather than Swedish percentage. Moreover, although Finland is often regarded as part of Scandinavia, the census limits this entry to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland.⁸⁹ Finland falls within the "Europe" category, making it equally hazardous to calculate the percentage of Finnish workers.⁹⁰ A further complication arises from the "Swede Finns," a group who originate from Finland but with Swedish as their first language.⁹¹ Two different employment documents from Comox Logging and Railroad Company reveal that nearly 50 percent of 200 Swede Finnish and Finnish employees had Swedish

⁸⁸ Ibid. 6.

⁸⁹ Although most literary sources agree with the census definition, some confusion exists about exactly which countries belong to Scandinavia. For instance, according to Ljungmark and Åkerman's explication, Scandinavia includes Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, while Iceland is a separate entity. See, Ljungmark and Åkerman, "The Unknown Emigration," 105.

⁹⁰ There is very little work done on Finns in the B.C. logging industry, but both Bruce Magnusson and Ian Radforth note that the rank and file of the Ontario woodworkers' union was mainly Finnish during this period. See Bruce Magnusson, *The Untold Story of Ontario's Bushworkers* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1990), xvi; and Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). Clearly, many Finns in B.C., too, were working-class activists. They developed a commune on Malcolm Island, temperance associations in Nanaimo and North Wellington, and created four Finnish locals of the Socialist Party of Canada in British Columbia. See Varpu Lindstrom-Best, "The Socialist Party of Canada and the Finnish Connection, 1905-1911," in *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, ed. Jörgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando (Toronto: Canadian Ethnic Studies Association series; v.8, 1981), 114 and 119.

⁹¹ Sweden dominated Finland for six and a half centuries, and Swede Finns are the descendants of Swedish imperial bureaucrats. While their language and origin are Swedish, they generally perceive their loyalties

names.⁹² This makes them indistinguishable from Scandinavians in union records that do not reveal national origin, thereby erroneously elevating figures of Scandinavian union participation. Further calculations are therefore required in order to approximate the Finnish ratio of the workforce.

According to the 1931 census, 20 percent of all employed Scandinavian men in British Columbia worked in the forest industry.⁹³ It is probable that Finnish workers at least matched that ratio. Thus, since 4 311 Finnish males lived in British Columbia in 1931, probably at least 863 loggers of Finnish origin worked in British Columbia. Assuming that the figures from Comox Logging are large enough to be representative, 50 percent of those 863, that is, 431 Finnish-origin loggers in B.C., had Swedish names, making them indistinguishable from Scandinavians in the union records.⁹⁴ By adding these Swede Finns to the Scandinavian numbers the combined participation of Scandinavians and Finns with Swedish names in the workforce increases to 27.6 percent. This should be the lowest number to consider when calculating Scandinavian union involvement in the 1930s.⁹⁵

to be with Finland. Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19-50, and 163-164.

⁹² That is, forty-seven of ninety-four employees who were registered as Finns or Swede Finns had Swedish sounding names. These were: Asplund, Brandback, Bjorklund, Beckman, E. Blomquist, Back, A. Blomquist, Oscar Bjork, Carlson, Uno Englund, Fred Erickson, Frank Erickson, Frilund, Fors, Fogelstrom, Flink, Granskog, John Hagg, , V. Holm, W. Haglund, , Hellsten, Holm, Haggblad, Johnson, Evert Kald, Runar Kald, Lundgard, Herman Lillqvist, Fred Lillqvist, Joe Matson, Emil Matson, Ture Nyman, E. Norgran, A. Nygran, Norrgren, Erik Peterson, John Peterson, Rambeck, Gunnar Riddar, C. Ronnquist, Gunnar Sik. Fink, Forsberg, Hagkull, J. Lundberg, Lyttbacka, and Carl Nyback. See, Employment ledger, Comox Logging, 1929-1944, CA. In another Comox Logging list, 49 of 102 Finnish-origin workers have Swedish names. See "Employees," CLR-Series, CMA.

⁹³ For a closer estimation of the per capita Scandinavian and Swedish ratio in the logging industry based on the number of Scandinavian residents in B.C., see, St. Jean, "The Myth of the Big Swede Logger," 24-25.

⁹⁴ Census of Canada, Vol.2, Table 32, "Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin, by counties or census division, 1931."

⁹⁵ In 1941, the male Finnish population had decreased to 3 609, but the above calculation suggests that if 720 Finns worked in the forest industry, at least 360 Finnish names were indistinguishable from Scandinavian. Thus, in 1941, if we add these 360 to the 2 695 Scandinavian loggers, and calculate a percentage based on a total workforce of 14 274, the ratio of Scandinavians and Finns with Scandinavian

Membership lists of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) and other documents left by the union president Harold Pritchett provide evidence on Scandinavian union participation. Although these lists do not identify the members' nationality, it is possible to isolate Scandinavian names and estimate the proportion of union members who were Scandinavian. Some committee lists from 1934 and 1936 show a significant involvement, but on the whole Scandinavian names in the membership files barely match their ratio in the workforce. They were particularly influential during the 1934 strike that affected companies on Vancouver Island.⁹⁶ One list suggests that of 103 members in the "Central Strike Committee," 36 had Scandinavian names.⁹⁷ Another records a negotiating committee with delegates from thirteen companies and a total of thirty-five representatives. Of these, eleven had Scandinavian names.⁹⁸ While it is impossible to estimate how many were Swede-Finns, the above calculation suggests the Scandinavian participation of 31.4 percent was slightly higher than their 27.4 percent ratio in the workforce, but still in keeping with local concentrations of Scandinavian loggers.⁹⁹ Moreover, both loggers and the general public generally supported this particular dispute, and therefore the Scandinavian involvement reflects a widespread commitment.

names was at least 21.4 percent. See Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 12, "Gainfully occupied, 14 years of age and over, by occupation and sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and racial origin, for Canada and the provinces, 1941;" and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 43, "Population by birthplace and sex, for counties or census divisions, 1941."

⁹⁶ The strike originated in Campbell River in January 1934, but soon spread to most camps on Vancouver Island. The headquarters, however, were in Vancouver. See Hak, "Red Wages: Communists and the 1934 Vancouver Island Loggers Strike," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 80.3 (July 1989): 85.

⁹⁷ H.P. Box 1-1.

⁹⁸ H.P., Box 1-1.

⁹⁹ If, as the lists from Comox Logging indicates, Bjork, Bjorklund and Fogelstrom were Finnish, the *Scandinavian* participation in the negotiating committee decreases to 22.8 percent. While this is an under-representation according to their participation in the logging industry according to 1931 census, it is an over-representation according to the 1941 census. Although this suggests Scandinavians at least matched other ethnic groups in union involvement, it does not suggest that they were more active than were loggers from other ethnic groups.

The Scandinavian participation lessened already during strikes in 1936 and 1938. According to the Harold Pritchett papers, one strike committee from 1936 had 16 percent Scandinavian participation. They showed a similar moderate involvement in picket squads during the 1936 strike. Rock Bay, for instance, had three squads with a total of eighteen men who picketed on a rotating schedule. Scandinavians made up 30.2 percent of the workforce in the Rock Bay logging company, but this schedule records only four Scandinavian names as registered for duty. The Scandinavian involvement in the picket squads as a whole remained modest with only 11 of 52 names Scandinavian. If only two of these were of Finnish heritage the Scandinavian proportion decreases to 17.3 percent, which is below census calculations of the Scandinavian ratio in the workforce.¹⁰⁰

It is also doubtful if Swedish establishments were particularly supportive of their militant compatriots. In interviews by M. Kennedy,¹⁰¹ both the Norwegian union organizer, Arne Johnson, and his Swedish counterpart, Joe Anderson, denied that Swedish enterprises and societies were especially helpful during loggers' labour disputes. When Arne Johnson mentioned that an organization offered the strikers a hall rent free on Hastings Street in 1934, Kennedy asked:

Kennedy: Was it Swedish?

Johnson: Pardon?

Kennedy: Was it a Swedish organization?

¹⁰⁰ Italicized names are typically Scandinavian, although, as is seen by the Comox Logging employment records, names such as Holm, Bjorklund, and Storbjork were commonly Finnish. The pickets for the 1936 strike were: Squad 1, Rock Bay: Sokolick, Law, Izemu, Hara, Bald, Jordnck [?]; squad 2, Rock Bay: Rukavina, *Olson*, *Holm*, *Sandström*, *Erickson*, Druck, Sivnocha; squad 3, Rock Bay: Coriak, Zibunich, Janski, Silen, Karchena; squad 4, Lake Logging: *Bjorklund*, McCallum, Racelich, Brezoval, Golinsky, Lepowsky; squad 5, Lake Logging: Masquette, *Ekstrom*, Ramkin, Perecsi, Wallace; squad 6, VLM: *Nils*[?]; squad 7, VLM: Hicks; squad 8 Rainy River: Smith, Niemi, Niemi, Lambi, *Olofson*, Caplari, Kallio, Typpo, Punni, Ilmonen, Koskila, Luoma, Husitalo, Joslyn, Fenell; squad 9, Camps 3 and 6: *Engman*, Hay; squad 10, Smith and Osbergorn [?]: *Storbjork*, *Olson*, Macki, Kukkola. See H.P. Box 1-5.

¹⁰¹ While these interviews may seem to contain "leading" questions, they had the effect of throwing even more light on the interviewees' responses since they were forced to consider the Swedish community directly.

Johnson: No, no. It wasn't a Swedish community, not Elks, Eagles, not Rotary, but one of those organizations.¹⁰²

Kennedy received a similar answer when questioning Joe Anderson on how the strikers raised food and money during the long months of no income:

Anderson: Some camps were working and we collected from them . . . [and there were] soup kitchens in Vancouver, a restaurant on Carrall Street . . .

Kennedy: Who? Was it citizens group in Vancouver . . . like the Swedish community group that held soup kitchens for you?

Anderson: No, we had our own soup kitchens . . . we financed it ourselves and we'd even go out to the Fraser Valley and collect vegetable and things for the cookhouse.¹⁰³

Despite the interviewer's deliberate attempt to induce recollections of incidents where the Swedish community stood behind the striking loggers, Anderson and Johnson did not concur, nor did they volunteer other instances where Swedish organizations were particularly helpful. Certainly, Swedish organizations were less supportive of the union than Kennedy seemed to have believed.¹⁰⁴

In a similar fashion, Jerry Lembcke's claim that "the union's left-wing ranks were dominated by Scandinavians" seems hasty.¹⁰⁵ On the contrary, Swedish and Norwegian names were notably absent in district council meetings. While the Swede-Finn Ernie Dalskog and the Norwegian Hjalmar Bergren were indeed founders of the union, Anglo-Canadian delegates dominated district council meetings. When nineteen members of Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) met in April 1936, the only Scandinavian present was the Norwegian logger, Arne Johnson. Most other names were Anglo-

¹⁰² Arne Johnson, interview with M. Kennedy, May 1972, Aural History Transcript # 70, University of British Columbia, Special Collection (hereafter UBC SC), p 23.

¹⁰³ Joe Anderson, interview with M. Kennedy, May 1972, Aural History Transcript # 72, UBC SC, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ Still, some Swedish businesses actively supported the strikers. Irene Howard claims that a Swedish café, *Hembygden*, housed the relief committee and served 800 daily meals during the 1934 logging strike. Howard, "Vancouver Swedes and the Loggers," 175.

¹⁰⁵ Lembcke, "The International Woodworkers of America: An Internal Comparative Study," 250.

Canadian.¹⁰⁶ When sixteen delegates met later in May, again the only Scandinavian was Arne Johnson.¹⁰⁷

The overt Scandinavian commitment to the IWA decreased even further in the 1940s. In 1941, Scandinavians and Finns with Swedish names made up approximately 21.4 percent of the workforce. Nonetheless, in six leadership meetings between 1944 and 1948 the Scandinavian participation was as low as 4.7 percent and never above 10 percent.¹⁰⁸ During a conference for organizers in 1944, Ernie Dalskog and Hjalmar Bergren were the only Scandinavian names among eleven participants. If we discount Dalskog, a known Swede-Finn,¹⁰⁹ the Scandinavian involvement shrinks to 9 percent.¹¹⁰

While the Scandinavian involvement seems higher in conventions that allowed each local to send several delegates, these figures are skewed because of a high involvement in the “Loggers’ Local,” 1-71, one of two IWA locals in Vancouver.¹¹¹ During a 1944 International Convention in Vancouver, of forty-one representatives from eight locals in District One, seven had Scandinavian names. A full five of the

¹⁰⁶ A total 68.4 percent seemed Anglo-Saxon: Pritchett, Grant, Nichol, Harrison, Cadwallader, Hubbard, Pollock, Brown, Dodwell, McCutcheon, Mackenzie and Haskin. Moreover, Sakumoto and Umezuki appeared Japanese, Arseneau and Lajuenesse French Canadian, and Vanderkley may have been of Dutch origin. See H.P. Box 1-8. As a comparison, in 1941, British origin loggers made up 56 percent of the workforce.

¹⁰⁷ The names were: Vanderkley, Arseneau, Grant, McCutcheon, Hubbard, *Johnson*, Pollock, McDonald, Alsbury, Nichols, Pritchett, Whalen, Umezuki, Cadwallader, Black, and Sakumoto. See “Lumber and Saw-Mill Workers Union, Minutes,” April 29, 1936 and May 4, 1936, H. P., Box 1-8.

¹⁰⁸ In another example, when the B.C. District Council No. 1 sent thirty-two delegates to a CCL convention only two — 6.8 percent — were Scandinavian. See Proceedings from the Canadian Council of Labour Convention, September 23, 1946.

¹⁰⁹ Ernie Dalskog emigrated from Finland in 1923, and joined the LWIU in 1932. He was a union organizer during the 1934 strike and one of the leaders behind the WIUC in 1948. See B.C. Lumber Worker, October 6 (1948), 1.

¹¹⁰ H.P. Box 5-4.

¹¹¹ This local, also known as “the Loggers’ Local,” stretched from West Vancouver to Pemberton, and north to the Alaska Panhandle. Despite its name, some sawmills also belonged to 1-71, but the majority of members were loggers. It was one of the founding locals, created in 1937, and it served as headquarter for loggers who lived in Vancouver but worked in various camps in the province. In February 3, 1998 it merged with local 217. It is still known as “Loggers’ Local” in Vancouver, but is numbered 2171. Norm Garcia, I.W.A. Canada, Vancouver, B.C., telephone conversation with author, January 25, 1999.

Scandinavians, however, belonged to local 1-71, while the remaining seven locals listed only two Scandinavian names among a total of thirty-one delegates. Thus, while the total Scandinavian ratio was 17 percent, the Scandinavian participation within the other seven locals drops to 4.8 percent during a period when they should have made up 21.4 percent of the union in order to represent Scandinavian workers in the B.C. logging industry.¹¹²

As a comparison to the Scandinavian union commitment in British Columbia, an American blacklist of undesirable workers in the logging industry suggests moderate Swedish and Scandinavian engagement south of the border. Jerry Lembcke claims that the largest immigrant groups in B.C. and in the forest regions of northwestern United States were British, German and Scandinavian, with a preponderance of Swedes.¹¹³ The blacklist names 910 loggers, primarily from Washington and Oregon. Of those, only 167 — 18 percent — had Scandinavian names, most seemingly Swedish.¹¹⁴ The majority of the other blacklisted workers appear Anglo-Saxon. Moreover, the list also recorded the employees' position in the workforce, and it is clear that most Swedes worked elsewhere than in falling. Of 167 loggers with Scandinavian names, 14 were employed as fallers, 23 as buckers, 27 as chokermen, while the rest were scattered in more than 32 different positions.

¹¹² Locals from Duncan (1-80), Port Alberni (1-85), Victoria (1-118), Vancouver (1-217), New Westminster (1-357), Courtney (1-363), and Cranbrook (1-405) sent thirty-one delegates of whom two had Scandinavian names. Local 1-71 sent ten delegates, of whom five had Scandinavian names. See "Supplement No. 18," Proceedings of the Eight Annual Constitutional Convention, Vancouver, B.C., October 24, 1944.

¹¹³ Lembcke, "The International Woodworkers of America: An Internal Comparative Study," 232.

¹¹⁴ "Reported as Undesirable Employees," Henry Fabbe's personal archive, University of Washington, Special Collection. I am indebted to Per Nordahl, Umeå University, Sweden, for sharing this document. Note that several seemingly Swedish names may just as easily be of British origin. The record lists seventeen Anderson, two Henderson, and twenty Johnson, all of whom I have regarded as Swedish in order to err on the side of caution. Although one might discern the ethnicity from given names, this method is equally ambiguous and many entries only show first name initials. Still, names such as Edward, Harry, Howard, John, Matt, Milton, Paul, Chas., Andrew, Ed, and Frank suggest a non-Scandinavian background, in which case the actual number of blacklisted Swedish loggers dips below the estimated 167.

There is also a tendency to over-emphasize the degree of commitment among active Swedish union members. For instance, when interviewing Joe Anderson, M. Kennedy seemingly assumed that Joe was active both as a socialist and union activist, although Joe's responses indicate otherwise. When Joe remarked that he was not working when the 1934 strike broke out Kennedy asked: "But you were right behind it, were you?" "Of course," Joe replied. "Everybody was behind it." Next Kennedy suggested that Joe "must've made quite a name for [him]self with the . . . bosses", and that he "must've been on the top of the blacklist." Joe, however, disagreed: "Well, no. I wouldn't say on the top . . . there were worse guys there than me . . . course you couldn't say blacklist and you were blacklisted." Moreover, he claimed he "wasn't in [the LWIU] too much . . . other people . . . started it." Later, when Joe reminisced on how organizers brought leaflets into camps, Kennedy asked: "They were all pretty red, were they?" Joe again resisted agreeing with the interviewer: "Some of them were, some of them were just [sic] common sense."¹¹⁵ Thus, Joe indicated that his own involvement was minor and he distinguished between radical literature and what he called "common sense." Joe Anderson was Swedish and worked in the union, but the transcript indicates that he was not a red-hot radical, and worked on the fringes in a movement that was at least passively supported by most loggers.

Joe's example shows that care must be taken before equating militancy with radicalism. This is underscored in interviews with active unionists who objected to being labeled leftwing and drew sharp distinctions between their work in the local and any political affiliation. "Gunnar Gustavson" notes that active union members sooner or later were classified as radical regardless of their political persuasion:

¹¹⁵ Joe Anderson, interview, 13.

Anyone with any leadership who is involved with the union, even today, some people say, “You have a communist attitude.” They have no idea or understanding of the makeup of the people, because it takes all kinds of people to make a union. But anyone with a leadership, even here, with the [liberal] opposition party of the British Columbia government, they are always referring to the communists or Marxist leaders of the labour movement.¹¹⁶

Gunnar distrusted the Communist influence in the union, believing that they had a hidden agenda withheld from the rank and file. He claimed that if a logger appeared to sympathize with the party, a Communist would soon show up, usually with an offer of free alcohol, asking the prospective member to formally join the party. While Gunnar recalled that some Swedes were “card-carrying Communists,” most, he claimed, ignored the party propaganda since “loggers have a real shy of any form of politics.”¹¹⁷

Scandinavians, however, showed an exceptional concentration in the Loggers’ Local, 1-71, but that may have a demographic explanation. District 4, which included Vancouver, had an unusually strong concentration of Swedes and other Scandinavians, and it is possible that the local functioned as a meeting ground and focal point for Scandinavian loggers during their stay in the city. Per Nordahl’s study of Swedish political associations in Chicago provides a framework for understanding ethnic support systems that might be applicable here as well. Nordahl argues that Swedish socialists in Chicago built a protective network similar to that of the labour movement in Sweden. Thus, cultural and educational organizations cooperated with trade unions and political parties. Swedish clubs and Swedish-American political groups in Chicago in turn operated within a greater American umbrella organization such as the American Federation of Labor or the Socialist Party of America. Nordahl suggests this system

¹¹⁶ Gunnar Gustavson [pseud.], interview with author, Vancouver Island, 1998.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

created a haven within which Swedish socialist immigrants could express their political belief in an American working-class environment.¹¹⁸

Vancouver contained some of these necessary support systems that might have allowed for a similar Swedish-Canadian labour expression.¹¹⁹ Vancouver had a particularly strong Swedish community¹²⁰ and there is some evidence that a history of labour initiatives existed within this albeit mainly conservative group. The Vancouver Swedes led a rich organizational life,¹²¹ out of which the labour clubs and the Swedish chapter of the International Order of the Good Templars (IOGT) were perhaps the most important.¹²² Here, Irene Howard's compilation of Swedish-Canadian organizations is particularly useful since she maintains that Vancouver had a Scandinavian branch of the Industrial Workers of the World, and that a Swedish Workers' Club amalgamated into the Scandinavian Workers' Club in 1932.¹²³ This suggests traces of Swedish radicalism in

¹¹⁸ Nordahl, Weaving the Ethnic Fabric, 22-24.

¹¹⁹ Similarly, Ulf Jonas Björk notes that the Swedish socialist Nils F:son Brown's believed that the only way to create a Swedish Canadian socialist group in Winnipeg was by using other Swedish Canadian cultural groups as a support system. See, Ulf Jonas Björk, "Swedish Ethnicity and Labor Socialism": 764.

¹²⁰ In 1932, District Four, which incorporates Lower Fraser Valley, had a Swedish-origin population of 6 977 out of which 3 881 lived in Vancouver. As a comparison, District Two, the Kootenays, had a Swedish population of 1 765, while District Five, Vancouver Island, came on a close third with 1 745 Swedes. See Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 32, "Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin, by counties or census division, 1931;" and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 33, "Population of cities and towns of 10,000 and over, classified according to racial origin, 1931."

¹²¹ Ljungmark and Åkerman suggest that the Swedish Canadian habit of "over organizing" in a plethora of various clubs and organizations hampered their level of ethnic consciousness by preventing them from "concentrat[ing] on one or two common ethnic manifestations." Ljungmark and Åkerman, "The Unknown Emigration," 110.

¹²² Nordahl notes the importance in particular of the IOGT since a "strong historical connection between the temperance movement and the labor movement put the Swedes in a unique position compared to most other radical labor groups in the US." Nordahl, Weaving the Ethnic Fabric, 69. As for the political importance of the IOGT in Sweden, Christer Winberg argues that conservative churches resisted the IOGT because of its connection with the Social Democratic Party. He quotes a priest who claimed to rather see ten drunks in a ditch than one sober Good Templar. Winberg claims the late arrival of the IOGT to a textile district in southern Sweden delayed the breakthrough of the union. See Christer Winberg, Fabriksfolket. Textilindustrin i Mark och arbetarrörelsens genombrott (Göteborg, Sweden: Vasastadens bokbinderi, 1989), 170-173.

¹²³ Howard, Vancouver's Svenskar, 88-92.

Vancouver even prior to the 1920s.¹²⁴ Combined with numerous other Swedish and Scandinavian organizations, it is possible that enough of a “haven” emerged that enabled a greater participation of Swedes in the Canadian labour organizations.

Other communities also had embryonic Scandinavian support systems, but it is unclear if this led to a higher participation in the union movement. Although a Scandinavian Club supported the reputedly radical Scandinavian population in Cowichan Lake,¹²⁵ they made up only a small portion of the IWA delegates in the Duncan local.¹²⁶ The IWA records also indicate that Port Alberni, where Swedes and Swede Finns erected a hall for unemployed workers,¹²⁷ showed a relatively modest Scandinavian union participation.¹²⁸ Thus, while these communities had some organizational support, it was

¹²⁴ See *Nya Svenska Pressen*, 24 February 1938, p. 4. Clearly the connection between the IOGT and labour activists existed in Vancouver as well. For instance, in 1918 the IWA organizer Eric Graff became a member of the Swedish IOGT lodge in Vancouver. See “The International Order of the Good Templar, Logen Linnéa, No. 76, Membership record, 1911-1919,” Box 1-3, UBC SC.

¹²⁵ This club has survived into the 1990s. See *Lake Cowichan Gazette*, December 18, 1996. Several interviewees point to the Cowichan Lake Swedes as particularly strong radical influences. “Nils Nordlund” claims that “every radical” from that era came to the Scandinavian dances. Nils suggests that “whether they were or were not radical when they arrived, they became that way to fit in with their ethnic community.” Nils Nordlund [pseud.], interview with author, 1998, Vancouver Island. See also Birger Bergström [pseud.], interview with author, 1998, Vancouver Island. Another Swedish immigrant, however, disagrees, suggesting that even in Lake Cowichan most Swedes were indifferent to politics and unions. According to this interviewee, radical Swedes merely were more vocal and thus attracted attention. See Alf Asplund, [pseud.], interview with author, 1999, Vancouver Island.

¹²⁶ In IWA’s 1944 international convention, the Duncan local, 1-80, had nine delegates, none of whom were Scandinavian; in the B.C. District No. 1 1945 convention 11.5 percent of the delegates were Scandinavian; and in the 1948 District convention, only 13.6 percent of the Duncan delegates were Scandinavian.

¹²⁷ “Mats Marklund” and “Isaak Ingram” claim that the hall was built by “charity lumber [and] unemployed workers.” Ture Sträng, a Swede Finnish “chiropractor who turned radical,” and a Swede, David Karlsson organized the construction. It was initially called “Workers’ Hall,” but became “Victory Hall” when the war broke out. In 1944 the Port Alberni IWA local renamed it the “Eric Graff Hall” after the well-known Swedish organizer who had died in 1939. In 1948, the Eric Graff Hall proved to be one of the few instances where the WIUC won a court case against the IWA. For more information regarding Eric Graff see, “Eric Graff Passes On,” *B.C. Lumber Worker*, February 28, 1939, p.1; for the events leading to the renaming of the hall in Graff’s name, see *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting*, International Woodworkers of America, Local 1-85, Port Alberni, B.C., February 13, 1944; and for records of the court trial and history of the Workers’ Hall, see Supreme Court Document, “Argument between the International Woodworkers of America and the Port Alberni Woodworkers’ Holding Society, Defendant’s Argument,” No. M. 1706/48, Port Alberni Museum and Archives.

¹²⁸ The Scandinavian participation from the Port Alberni local in District 1 conventions was 25 percent in 1944, 17.6 percent in 1945, and 0 percent in 1948. While the 1944 figure seems high, this year’s low

not sufficiently developed to bolster a strong Scandinavian commitment in the Canadian labour movement.¹²⁹

The Courtenay IWA local, however, demonstrated a strong Scandinavian involvement after its certification in 1942. Moreover, this involvement was evident both in the IWA and in the competing breakaway union, the Woodworkers' Industrial Union of Canada. While Swedes in Courtenay boasted no more Scandinavian club involvement than the other two Vancouver Island communities, they did erect the "Swede Hall" in Merville, a small community between Courtenay and Campbell River.¹³⁰ Swedes and Swede Finns built the hall with the help of donated material from Comox Logging and the encouragement of its Swedish-born manager, Robert Filberg. His generosity, however, might at least in part have stemmed from a desire to maintain a strong Scandinavian and Finnish community that could provide trained workers for Comox Logging.¹³¹

participation distorts the statistics. Only a total of four delegates participated, of which one had a Scandinavian name. As a comparison, in 1945 three of seventeen Port Alberni delegates were Scandinavian.

¹²⁹ In 1941, Nya Svenska Pressen inquired why despite the relatively high numbers of Swedes there was no Swedish club in Port Alberni. At the same time the paper expressed doubt that the Port Alberni Swedes were interested in a Swedish-Canadian unity. Nya Svenska Pressen, April 18, 1941. Later issues, however, indicate that a Port Alberni Scandinavian Social Club existed for a number of years. It held its inaugural meeting in February, 1944 and was still active in April, 1948. See Nya Svenska Pressen, Mars 2, 1944 and April 1, 1948.

¹³⁰ See Gunnar Gustavsson [pseud.], interview, and D. E. Isenor et al, The Land of Plenty A History of the Comox District (Campbell River, BC: Ptarmigan Press, 1987), 106.

¹³¹ Filberg, like most other boss loggers, detested the union but gained a reputation as a benefactor for the Comox Valley community. After an unsuccessful attempt to stop a strike vote in Camp 3 in 1934, Filberg admits to have laid off "thirty of those whom [he] knew had voted to strike." See Robert Filberg to H. J. Mackin, Manager Fraser Mills, April 14, 1934, CLR Series 2 7/12, part 2, CMA. Courtenay still celebrates "Filberg Days" each summer, Comox has a "Filberg Center," and the old Filberg house has been turned into a museum. For more information about Robert Filberg, see Robert Filberg, interview with C. D. Orchard, transcript, Comox, 14 June, 1960, CRMA. Re his philanthropic endeavors, see Comox District Free Press, April 1, 1977.

While the Courtenay local organized relatively late, it quickly gained strength. In 1938 Brother Petersen, of the Loggers' Local 1-71, noted that the district had failed to carry out its provincial organizational program:

mainly because an enormous amount of money was spent in setting up an organization in Courtenay. The members in that local were not awake to the fact that it was their responsibility to build the local. No local was stronger than Courtenay in local autonomy. I think that this is one of the reasons why the district council failed to build up the Courtenay local.¹³²

Thus, while Petersen regarded Courtenay as unusually independent, he considered it very difficult to organize.¹³³ Later, however, Courtenay increased its involvement in the IWA, and in 1948 the Scandinavian community divided between the IWA and the Woodworkers' Industrial Union of Canada.¹³⁴ Ironically, therefore, while Filberg's intentions were surely to encourage a stable, conservative Swedish community, it may have provided an extra nudge of security so Swedes of both radical and reform persuasions could become involved in union affairs.

It is unclear why certain communities developed stronger union locals than others. It has been argued that single men had less to lose in times of labour conflict and therefore could devote themselves more wholeheartedly to union efforts.¹³⁵ Evidence suggests, however, that community involvement, in particular strong support from women's groups, aided union formation. Certainly, marriage alone did not encourage

¹³² "Annual Convention, B.C. Coast District Council, July 30 and 31, 1938," H.P. Box 5-13.

¹³³ In the same meeting, Eric Graff expressed disappointment over the low organizational level in Port Alberni. Ibid.

¹³⁴ Scandinavian participation from the Courtenay local in district conventions was relatively high. In 1944, one of four delegates was Scandinavian; in 1945, five of thirteen; in 1948, five of seventeen; in the first convention of the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada, two of eleven Courtenay delegates were Scandinavian. Also, two of three Courtenay delegates to the 1949 IWA International Convention had Scandinavian names.

¹³⁵ Adele Perry argues that B.C.'s gender imbalance has encouraged a historiographic "volcano" theory. Accordingly, single white men channeled their sexuality by becoming radicals or by forming relationships with Native women. See Adele Perry, "'Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men': Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," *BC Studies* 105-106 (1995): 27-43.

militancy. In fact, “Mats Marklund” claimed to have avoided union activities because of his impending marriage.¹³⁶ Therefore, individual family attachment was not enough, but there was a need for a more organized behavior. Indeed, the strongest locals in District 1 also had equally strong Women’s Auxiliaries. Citing the women’s movement in Lake Cowichan, Sara Diamond shows the importance of the Women’s Auxiliary in the IWA. For example, a Swedish woman, Hildur Grip, actively aided union organizers. It was dangerous even for wives to help the union, since it could lead to dismissal and blacklisting of their husbands. Nevertheless, Hildur blackened the windows of their woodshed, so ad hoc union meetings could proceed.¹³⁷ Although less carefully documented, the Courtenay local seems to have enjoyed the support of a strong Women’s Auxiliary. “Gunnar Gustavsson” claims it remained strong until in the 1950s when it “died down.”¹³⁸ Likewise, a Scandinavian woman, Anna Halstrom, led the women’s auxiliary of local 1-363. It “was considered the most politically active Women’s Auxiliaries in the I.W.A., and, in those days, one of the more significant attempts to include women in the trade union movement.”¹³⁹ Vancouver also had several Scandinavian women’s groups, although it is unclear how involved these were in labour issues since most seemed devoted to maintaining Scandinavian culture.¹⁴⁰ More research

¹³⁶ Mats Marklund [pseud.], interview with author, Vancouver Island, 1998.

¹³⁷ Sara Diamond, “A Union Man’s Wife: The Ladies’ Auxiliary Movement in the IWA, The Lake Cowichan Experience,” in Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays On the History of Women’s Work in British Columbia, ed. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984) 290.

¹³⁸ In 1944 Nya Svenska Pressen noted some Scandinavian women among the leaders in the Women’s Auxiliary to local 1-363. Mrs Erickson and daughters “charmed” with accordion music, while Mrs. Cowie, Mrs Hanson, Mrs Halstrom, and Mr Don Barbour spoke. See Nya Svenska Pressen, 16 Mars, 1944 and Gunnar Gustavsson [pseud.], interview, 14.

¹³⁹ Nya Svenska Pressen, 16 Mars, 1944.

¹⁴⁰ Nya Svenska Pressen listed four women’s clubs in 1938. *Hjälpsamhet* was devoted to “relief work” and “striving for Swedishness;” *Lekstugan* promoted folkdancing; and *Nornans Systrar* was the women’s auxiliary to the fraternal order *Vasalogen Nornan*. The only women’s group that directly supported a

is needed before concluding to what degree women's organization aided male unions, but evidence indicates that logging locals with such support showed a greater involvement among the rank and file.

Clearly, Swedes or Scandinavians were not over-represented among the unionists, although many Swedes were active in the labour movement. Some, such as Eric Graff¹⁴¹ and "Kjell Kellerud," became radical while living in Sweden, and spent their lives building union and political awareness among their fellow workers both in their old and new country. Yet others, such as "Birger Bergström's" father, who was married with children before deciding to emigrate, never belonged to any union in Sweden. Still, he became involved in the LWIU in the 1930s, and stayed committed throughout his working life, passing a strong sense of union values along to his children.¹⁴² By the same token, "Mats Marklund" did not believe that Scandinavians and Finns arrived in Canada as radicals, but he supposed that the hard life of the old country left them "oriented to protest when things were not right."¹⁴³

Martin Johansson, too, arrived in Canada politically naïve and trusting that whatever government in power would defend workers' well being. After experiencing the Depression first hand, Martin were embittered:

I've seen a bit more of how things are done since I got out in the world. I didn't understand much when I was home [in Sweden]. I believed what I read in the right-wing newspapers but now I know that this is the biggest

labour club was the Women's Auxiliary of a Swede-Finnish labour club, *Svensk Finska Arbetar Klubben*. See *Nya Svenska Pressen*, February 24, 1938.

¹⁴¹ "Isaak Ingram" claims that Eric Graff was forced to "burn his papers" and leave Sweden because of his activism in the union movement. Isaak Ingram [pseud.], interview with author, Vancouver Island, 1998. There are, however, no evidence of this in either union documents or police reports in Graff's hometown, Östersund, either during the strike or at the time of his emigration.

¹⁴² Birger Bergström [pseud.], interview.

¹⁴³ Mats Marklund [pseud.], interview.

lie that ever existed.¹⁴⁴

In all of Johansson's 102 letters to Sweden, however, he never, except for one vague comparison with Sweden, discussed the need for unions nor did he mentioned attending political gatherings.¹⁴⁵ Since his letters after 1929 were increasingly critical of Canadian labour policy and the power of big industries, it is unlikely that his silence indicates a fear of censorship. He joined one demonstration for food, in Nelson, December 1930, but his letters focuses on the Scandinavian reaction rather on the political, even though the latter is definitely present. While his experience in Canada awakened his political consciousness, after his return to Sweden he did not become a union activist, nor did he even passively attend left-wing political meetings. Martin did, however, believe that the Social Democratic Labour Party was the only logical choice for Sweden's workers.¹⁴⁶ Considering the party's strength in the Swedish working class after the 1930s, it is possible that Martin would have turned to social democracy even without his stay abroad, but the contrast between powerless migrant workers and the ruthlessness of unrestrained employers conditioned a life-long conviction that workers must be politically conscious, and could not trust in capitalism's capacities to better their lives.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact origins of the myths, but a Scandinavian overrepresentation in the logging force in comparison with their ratio in the general population might be partly responsible. Although Scandinavians constituted only 6.3 percent of employed males in all occupations in British Columbia, they made up 25 percent of the workers in the logging industry. As a comparison, male British workers

¹⁴⁴ St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land," 219.

¹⁴⁵ In 1930 Martin Johansson wrote, "In Sweden the unemployed has a home & some support from unions & such but here he has nothing. We have started an unemployment union but we probably can't do much." St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land," 219.

comprised 64.4 percent of the workforce but only 35 percent of the employees in the logging industry. Thus, although British origin men belonged to the largest single ethnic group among loggers in British Columbia, they were underrepresented in proportion to the labour force as a whole, while the smaller number of Scandinavian loggers was over-represented in comparison to the general population. This, however, does not mean that logging was the only occupation open to Scandinavians.

In fact, they were not as concentrated in the forest industry as popular perception suggests. As Table 5.1 indicates, of 16 552 employed Scandinavian-origin men in British Columbia, 81 percent of male Scandinavians worked in other industries. Even if *all* Scandinavian forest workers were of Swedish origin, only 30 percent of this group could possibly have worked in logging.¹⁴⁷ If we go even further and suggest that all Scandinavian-origin loggers were Swedish *born* we still find that 55.4 percent of them would have worked elsewhere.¹⁴⁸ Certainly, Swedes and other Scandinavian males worked in a variety of occupations, and their participation in logging cannot justify stereotyping Scandinavians as particularly born to or drawn towards this industry.

The census further shatters the myth that Scandinavians were “born loggers” by pointing out that only a miniscule portion of the total Scandinavian population in Canada were employed in forestry. As Table 5.1 indicates, of 89 804 Scandinavian-origin males

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Roy Unge, November 2000 and August 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Of all Scandinavian-origin males living in B.C. in 1931, 10 434 were Swedes, 8 258 Norwegians, 2 509 Danes, and 429 were Icelanders. See Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 26, Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin by federal electoral districts, 1921; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 32 Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin by counties or census divisions, 1931.

¹⁴⁸ According to these figures only 76.5 percent of the total Scandinavian male population were employed in 1931. Corresponding figures for the “British Races” were 65.8 percent, the French 66.5 percent, and the Italian 64.4 percent. Scandinavians seemingly found it easier to find work than other ethnic groups; however, since Scandinavians were less inclined to family migration the number of employable male adults may have been disproportionately high. See Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 31, and Census of Canada,

in Canada, only 3 753 logged, and the vast majority of these — 3 147 — roamed the B.C. woods. In other words, only 4 percent of all Scandinavian men in Canada worked in the forest industry. These figures suggests that the high number of Scandinavian lumbermen in British Columbia encouraged an illusion particular to B.C. that Scandinavians were particularly interested in forestry.

Table 5.1. Gainfully occupied Scandinavian and British origin in Canada and British Columbia, 1931.

| Occupation | Total all groups | | British | | Scandinavian | |
|--|------------------|--------|-----------|---------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Canada | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 3,261,371 | 66,859 | 1,729,758 | 381,419 | 89,804 | 11,165 |
| Logging | 43,995 | 0 | 11,729 | 0 | 3,753 | 0 |
| Owners / managers | 2,463 | 0 | 1,064 | 0 | 189 | 0 |
| Foremen / overseer | 912 | 0 | 423 | 0 | 39 | 0 |
| Foresters / timber-cruisers | 3,182 | 0 | 1,641 | 0 | 89 | 0 |
| Lumbermen | 37,438 | 0 | 8,601 | 0 | 3,436 | 0 |
| British Columbia | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 262,515 | 43,748 | 169,275 | 35,127 | 16,552 | 1,751 |
| Agriculture | 42,209 | 1,429 | 23,637 | 692 | 2,680 | 57 |
| Fish. Hunt. Trapping | 9,409 | 47 | 1,876 | 11 | 1,308 | 19 |
| Logging | 12,929 | 0 | 4,624 | 0 | 3,147 | 0 |
| Owners / managers | 841 | 0 | 507 | 0 | 164 | 0 |
| Foremen / overseer | 167 | 0 | 109 | 0 | 24 | 0 |
| Foresters/ timber-cruisers | 334 | 0 | 290 | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| Lumbermen | 11,587 | 0 | 3,718 | 0 | 2,942 | 0 |
| Mining | 10,339 | 3 | 5,705 | 2 | 1,029 | 1 |
| Manufacturing | 26,568 | 2,804 | 20,411 | 1,828 | 1,230 | 78 |
| Electric power | 4,793 | 0 | 3,946 | 0 | 233 | 0 |
| Building and constr. | 19,010 | 1 | 15,458 | 1 | 1,407 | 0 |
| Transportation / Communication | 26,277 | 1,890 | 20,687 | 1,748 | 1,169 | 48 |
| Section foremen, section men, and trackmen | 2,673 | 0 | 693 | 0 | 238 | 0 |
| Warehousing | 2,460 | 464 | 2,161 | 399 | 64 | 19 |
| Trade | 22,201 | 4,727 | 17,371 | 4,120 | 357 | 107 |
| Finance, Insurance | 3,680 | 83 | 3,385 | 72 | 51 | 2 |
| Service | 31,224 | 23,348 | 21,173 | 18,132 | 704 | 1,255 |
| Clerical | 90,613 | 8,638 | 8,885 | 7,898 | 134 | 174 |
| Other | 41,732 | 308 | 19,894 | 218 | 3,038 | 10 |

Source: Census of Canada, Vol. 7, Table 49, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by occupation, racial origin, and sex, for Canada and the provinces, 1931.

The interviews indicate, however, that Swedish immigrants often internalized the myths of the Swedish loggers, even when these contradicted the personal experience.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Such myth creating is not unusual. Both Jonny Hjelm and Ella Johansson note that Swedish loggers constructed a persistent myth that forest work produced a high degree of freedom for the worker. Several sociological studies, however, show that this was a blatant misconception indicating that workers had low expectation and demands of the workplace. Jonny Hjelm, "Taylor i skogen," in *Dagsverken. 13 essäer i arbetets historia*, ed. Alf O. Johansson, Susanne Lundin and Lars Olsson, 164-193 (Lund, Sweden: Wallin och Dalholm, 1994), 165-168.

A letter to the editor of Svenska Pressen, a Vancouver-based Swedish-language newspaper, presented fanciful numbers regarding the Swedish participation in the B.C. logging industry. According to the signature “Otto R. Karlström,” 50 percent of between 10 000 and 15 000 loggers in British Columbia were Swedish.¹⁵⁰ Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici suggest that ethnic myths “shape people’s perception of reality.” Accordingly, immigrants use ethnic myths to place their own experience into an understandable perspective, and historians must in turn understand the impact of myths in order to analyze oral accounts correctly.¹⁵¹ This is also illustrated in several interviews with Swedish immigrants who cited logging as the only available occupation despite the fact that only 19 percent of all employed Scandinavians worked in the logging industry. Similarly, many non-union Swedish loggers still believed that Swedish loggers in general were radical union supporters. Thus, the idea that logging employed most Swedish men in B.C., combined with the perception that these men were radical union supporters was entrenched in the Swedish group even when occupational statistics and union documents fail to provide support.

Hence, there is not a clear correlation between Swedish union activism in British Columbia and their prior experience in Sweden. It is also highly doubtful if the theory of western exceptionalism can explain the growth of the forest unions in British Columbia. While it is true that many B.C. loggers were immigrants this alone does not explain their

¹⁵⁰ Svenska Pressen, “Våra skogsarbetare,” March 7, 1929.

¹⁵¹ Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici, “Exploring Myths in Women’s Narratives: Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961,” BC Studies nos. 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 159-182. Donald Akenson has argued a similar point regarding Irish immigrants in North America. He claims that obvious myth making and perpetuation of stereotyping has not only been accepted by Irish Americans, but that they have used “historical mythmaking” partly to “make the past less of an alien time” and partly to by comparison illustrate how far they have advanced as an ethnic group. See Donald Harman Akenson, Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America (Don Mills, Ontario: P.D. Meany Company Inc., 1985), 193

militancy during the 1930s.¹⁵² Forest unions developed simultaneously in British Columbia, Ontario and Newfoundland, three provinces with distinctly different labour structures. Many of Ontario's loggers were of Finnish origin, while the Newfoundland loggers were mostly of Anglo-Saxon heritage, native to Newfoundland, and working in logging to supplement fishing. Dufferin Sutherland argues that Newfoundland loggers responded with similar militancy to the 1930's conditions as loggers did in B.C. and Ontario.¹⁵³ Sutherland maintains that although the loggers' union in Newfoundland did not forward the same radical ideology as those in B.C. and Ontario, it was nevertheless militant.¹⁵⁴ Clearly, the simultaneous rise of unions in three different provinces with three distinct workforces suggests the men reacted to local conditions, most likely set off by wage reductions due to the Depression.

John Belshaw notes that historians generally conclude too quickly that radical impulses of immigrant workers must be rooted in a "cultural baggage," and that B.C.'s working-class history was "pre-written in England, Scotland and Wales." The fact that many loggers in British Columbia were non-British created a false sense that "foreigners" were more radical than Anglo-Canadians. In truth, loggers of varying ethnicity worked together in order to create a viable union. This indicates that we need to re-examine the "cultural baggage" argument. Rather than conveniently slot whole immigration groups

¹⁵² Henry Bengston, a well-known Swedish American radical, only learned about socialism when working as a lumberjack in Ontario. He later moved to the US where he became active in the Swedish socialist society in Chicago. See Westerberg, "Henry Bengston," 226. Likewise, Bruce Magnuson who organized lumber workers in Ontario claimed that when he emigrated from Sweden in 1928, his "knowledge of communism was zilch." He only learned about socialism after becoming a member of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union in Ontario in October 1933, where he participated in a violent strike where RCMP officers bludgeoned strikers. Magnuson, *The Untold Story*, 4-9.

¹⁵³ Bearing in mind that Newfoundland did not become a Canadian province until 1949, it still serves as a comparison.

¹⁵⁴ Dufferin Sutherland, "Newfoundland Loggers Respond to the Great Depression," *Labour/Le Travail* (1992): 83-115.

into “radical” or “retrogressive” immigrants, we must keep in mind that these groups were composed of individuals whose convictions and desire to organize unions varied. This is not to say that immigrants do not add parts of their native culture or political heritage to the host country. Rather, the influence of immigrants is both more complex and subtler than is suggested in the theory of western exceptionalism.

Chapter 6: Checked Your Baggage, Sir? The Role of the Homeland for Three Swedish Politicians in B.C., 1900-1950

The following chapter continues the discussion of politics among Swedish immigrants in British Columbia. By doing a case study on three men who entered into party politics in British Columbia, Chapter Six attempts to do two things. First it analyses the degree to which the sending country influenced individual immigrants in British Columbia. Secondly it looks at how and when upward class mobility for Swedish Canadians was possible. Rolf Wallgren Bruhn, Olof Hanson and Oscar Eliasson emigrated at different times and from different areas in Sweden, but while thirty years separates the departure date of the first and the third man, all were politically active in British Columbia during the 1930s and 1940s. Their lives in Sweden, as in B.C., contained a mixture of similarities and differences. They all experienced poverty in their childhood, but they differed in social status and class. Each emigrated from Swedish provinces that were noted for a delayed penetration by

the labour movement despite their differences in industrial focus. Rolf Bruhn (Conservative) and Olof Hanson (Liberal) travelled singly and attempted several occupations before embarking into successful business and political careers in British Columbia. Oscar Eliasson, however, was part of a group migration and joined a Swedish immigration society that was established by previous migrants from his home community who had become well entrenched in the B.C. working-class and were able to arrange work for Oscar prior to his arrival in BC. Most importantly, they represented three different major political parties, the Liberal Party (Hanson), the Conservative Party (Bruhn), and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (Eliasson). This chapter examines how the Swedish background, time of arrival in North America, circumstances connected to the emigration journey itself, and conditions in the receiving country influenced their social and political destinies in British Columbia.

The selection process for the three Swedish politicians was simple: a thorough search found no other Swedish-born immigrants in British Columbia during the time period of 1900-1950 who were active in seeking electoral office either provincially or federally. Some explanations, however, are due regarding the similarities and differences in the three politicians' background. As the following accounts will show, Swedish industries are highly localized, which accounts for the patent dissimilarities in each of the three geographical areas where these immigrants were born and raised. Likewise, the labour movement's political and union arms did not progress uniformly in Sweden in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which explains the relatively low penetration of the labour movement in the three areas.¹ Variables such as the type of industry, issues pertaining to land ownership, and the exchangeability of

the workforce and its accessibility to travelling socialist orators were influential factors. The different nature of farm workers in agricultural districts also came into effect. As elsewhere in the world, more industrialized agricultural workers, such as beet workers in Skåne, were easier to organize than isolated farm hands in areas dominated by family farms.² Likewise, the sawmill workers on the north coast had a stronger tradition within the union movement than had logging crews in the isolated mountain regions. For differing reasons, Bruhn, Hanson and Eliasson all came from areas that presented a challenge for the union movement. Clearly this does not necessarily mean that any of these men were introduced to the ideas of unions or socialism from their youth, but it makes it less likely that this was the case.

At the age of seventeen, Rolf Wallgren Bruhn emigrated from the seaport of Göteborg in 1896. Rolf was the second youngest child of Alex Wallgren, a Crown Reeve (*kronofogde*), whose position provided the family with economic independence and a respectable social standing. This bourgeois comfort shattered when Alex was caught in an embezzlement scandal, changed his name to Bruhn, and fled Sweden in 1890, thereby deserting the family and leaving the mother, Henrique Wallgren Klingstedt, to raise ten children on limited funds.³ Despite the resulting hardships, Rolf's family remained deeply entrenched in the bourgeois social life. His mother came from a well-known musical family; one of Rolf's brothers, Åke Wallgren, became a respected opera singer at the Swedish Royal House while another became a

¹ For a good explanation of the difficulties individual unions encountered, see Klas Åmark, Facklig makt och fackligt medlemskap. De svenska fackförbundens medlemsutveckling 1890-1940 (Lund, 1986).

² For comparisons with Canadian agricultural workers, see Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), and Terry Crowley: "Rural Labour," in Paul Craven, Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). For a comparison to agricultural workers in the United States, see Dennis Valdés, Al Norte. Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970 (Austin, 1991).

³ George M. Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn, Pioneer and Politician," Okanagan History (1995): 87, and Skandia July 25, 1935.

prominent businessman in Göteborg. Bruhn's youth, however, was equally entrenched in the culture of rough labour. After his father's desertion, Rolf worked as a street vendor, and at fifteen years of age, he dropped out of secondary grammar school (*läroverket*), and hired on as a deckhand on a steam ship between Sweden and the United States. On his return to Sweden two years later he found to his elation that he held the winning lottery ticket to Uddevalla sailing club's annual draw. The prize – a sailboat – financed Bruhn's permanent emigration.⁴

Just as Bruhn's family was cemented in the middle-class mindset – despite its financial embarrassment - so did the Liberal middle class – despite the city's large industrial working class, control Göteborg. After a financial crisis in 1878, Göteborg bypassed Stockholm as the financial centre, and because of its proximity to England's trade and capital markets, developed a more modern financial structure than Stockholm.⁵ Agriculture around Göteborg's is negligible: the soil is poor and the climate is too wet to provide good crops. Instead, it was and is Sweden's most important port city, with shipbuilding as the dominating industry. It also was the most important railway centre and academic hub in western Sweden.⁶ In 1890, the greater city population was 100 000. The biggest single employer was the Carnegie brewery with 450 employees and the Carnegie sugar factory with 260 employees. Shipyard and workshop industries, tobacco factories and print shops were next on the list of big employers.⁷ Nonetheless, despite these intellectual roots and large numbers of industrial workers, Göteborg was a bourgeois and Liberal stronghold.

⁴ *Malmö Tidningen*, July 31, 1937.

⁵ Lennart Schön, *En modern svensk ekonomisk historia. Tillväxt och omvandling under två sekel* (Stockholm: SNS, 2000), 189.

⁶ Olof Nordström, ed., *Det moderna Sverige: Götaland nord* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1970), 9-16.

⁷ Birgitta Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur – Göteborg 1890* (Göteborg, Sweden 1990), 45-48.

The Swedish ethnologist Birgitta Skarin Frykman argues that liberal middle-class philanthropists were at the helm of the most influential labour societies in Göteborg. The “middle classes,” the intermediate social and economic layer was made up by professionals, managers, merchants, and factory owners and differed from the working class both in income and in power. While not all members of the middle classes were strictly bourgeois, the majority employed workers, in particular domestic servants, and controlled the leading press.⁸ Political labour organisations that worked against these interests thus found survival difficult. Although socialism was introduced in Göteborg in the 1880s, it was greeted with suspicion. The ailing Social-Democratic Society, labour’s political body in Göteborg, expired in the fall of 1890 from a deadly syndrome of leadership problems, failing membership support, and a poor economy.⁹ In Göteborg’s most tenacious working-class organisation, the Labour Society, most of the 3000 members were workers, but an educated middle-class made up a significant minority and wielded the strongest influence. The society’s motto was “Pray and Work” and its goal was to help workers help themselves. It provided sickness and funeral benefits, a consumers’ association that controlled three grocery stores, besides an educational and library society.¹⁰ The purpose of the society, however, was not to elevate workers socially or economically but to teach them to live within their means.¹¹ Labour advocates on the left who wanted workers to fight for more substantial economic and political rights thus conflicted with the “Pray and Work” ideal. When the father of Swedish socialism, August Palm, tried to rent its premises in 1885 and again in 1890 the Labour society told him: “The Labour society

⁸ For a discussion on the difficulty of identifying this “middling layer”, see Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis* (Cambridge, 1997), 17-26.

⁹ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 23.

¹⁰ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 52.

¹¹ For a comparable Canadian example of paternalistic philanthropy, see Judith Fingard, “The Winters Tale: Contours of Pre-Industrial Poverty in British America, 1815-60,” *Historical Papers* (1974).

here have boycotted all socialist speakers without exception, and no socialists will be allowed to perform within its walls.”¹² It is unclear if the workers echoed these sentiments, but any demurring voices were too weak to penetrate the din of middle-class philanthropy.

It is not surprising therefore to find that the liberal paternalism that controlled the Labour Society also dominated the workplace. Bo Stråth’s comparative study on workers in the shipbuilding industry in Göteborg and Malmö around 1900 and later argues that patriarchy and paternalism in the former city delayed radicalisation among the workers. While shipyard workers in Malmö, less than 300 kilometers southeast of Göteborg, embraced Social Democracy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the party was less successful on the Göteborg wharfs. Stråth believes that a tradition of paternalism among Göteborg employers encouraged workers to turn their back on democratic union rhetoric. He points out that while Malmö workers stayed faithful to social democracy, in Göteborg any type of working-class radicalism was negligible until the late 1910s, and after the mid 1920s workers there were more likely to look toward Communism than they were to Social Democracy.¹³ This radical switch indicates a rejection of the earlier working-class strategies but it is also a measure of the explosive means workers must employ in order to break free of paternalism. Nonetheless, despite Rolf Bruhn’s experiences as a labourer, it is unlikely that he was exposed to any great degree of left-wing politics since Göteborg workers did not adopt it until fifteen years after Bruhn emigrated to Canada.

Göteborg’s church and temperance history underscores the city’s distancing from the socialist expressions that were rapidly gaining ground in other Swedish working-

¹² Skarin Frykman *Arbetarkultur*, 54.

¹³ Bo Stråth, *Varvsarbetare i två varvsstäder : en historisk studie av verkstadsclubbarna vid varven i Göteborg och Malmö*, (Göteborg, 1982). See also Christer Winberg’s comments, which place doubt on

class centres. According to Birgitta Skarin Frykman, the population of Göteborg was strongly influenced by both the Lutheran state church and the free churches. Likewise, Christer Winberg identifies a “bible belt” that stretched from the west coast of Bohuslän to the east coast of Kalmar, in Småland. In particular, an ultra-conservative Lutheran sect, the *Schartauan*, was entrenched among Göteborg workers and among the many migrants from western Sweden where it had a stronghold. The Schartuans took the name after their initiator, Henric Schartau. Christer Winberg argues that it was particularly strong among the “little people,” the workers and the servants. In the late nineteenth century the Schartuans combated working-class radicalism with apparent ease, possibly because of the intimate relationship that existed between the ministers and their flock, a relationship that involved regular frequent personal sessions in matters related to the faith.¹⁴

The labour movement clearly recognized the Schartuan ministers as formidable enemies. In the early 1900s, one organizer mused:

The explanations as to why [workers] distance themselves [to unions] could be many. The priests are our bitterest opponents, but in particular the priests from Bohuslän; they are known for their Schartau preaching, [and] abstain from any new [ideas] that seek to help the little people in society.¹⁵

Winberg notes that the Schartuans associated the working-class movement and socialism with Anti Christ, but he also points out that the temperance movement, first and foremost the International Order of the Good Templar (IOGT), was a hated target, much because of its alleged connection with the socialist movement. Because of the Schartuan ministry’s resistance to the IOGT, even non-politicized temperance workers had difficulty in establishing chapters in western Sweden. Winberg argues that a public acceptance of such attitudes resulted in a dearth of folk movements in the

the power of patriarchy as a weapon against union organizing. Christer Winberg, *Fabriksfolket. Textilindustrin i Mark och arbetarrörelsens genombrott* (Lund, 1989), 15-18 and 146.

¹⁴ Winberg, *Fabriksfolket*, 152.

area, and since the Swedish Social Democratic movement used existing folk movements as an instrument by which to reach workers, it seriously delayed its progress in areas that were saturated by the conservative church.¹⁶

Labour historians tend to hitch Swedish temperance to the socialistic labour movement, arguing that the drive for orderliness and sobriety was a movement from within the working class that went hand in hand with the demand for greater political influence.¹⁷ Accordingly, socialists maintained that when starvation-level wages drove despairing workers to drink, alcohol itself became a bourgeois tool that inhibited political labour responses by enfeebling the workers. Winberg, however, suggests that the general conservative climate in western Sweden caused temperance workers to withhold radical political rhetoric out of fear of losing their members.¹⁸ This seems to have been the case with Göteborg's temperance workers, who at least outwardly rejected socialist ideas. Instead, they endorsed the liberal notion that workers' dependence on alcohol rather than low wages led them into ruin. This refusal to admit a connection between drunkenness and economy created tension between the temperance and socialist movement. In 1882, the two clashed when the International Order of the Good Templar (IOGT) participated in an intensive smear campaign against social democracy in order to force one of the IOGT leaders to cease his socialist engagement. Thus, Skarin Frykman argues that in Göteborg, Liberals, the Conservative Church and the temperance movement united against socialism.¹⁹

¹⁵ Quoted in Winberg, *Fabriksfolket*, 151.

¹⁶ Winberg, *Fabriksfolket*, 170.

¹⁷ See for instance Ronny Ambjörnson, *Den skötsamme arbetaren. Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverkssamhälle 1880-1930* (Stockholm, 1988), Per Nordahl, *Weaving the Ethnic Fabric: Social Networks Among Swedish-American Radicals in Chicago 1890-1940*, (Stockholm, 1994), 115-116; and Marion Leffler, "Den svenska arbetarrörelsens bildningsinstitutioner. Bakgrund och forskningsöversikt," in Klaus Misgeld and Klas Åmark, *Arbetsliv och arbetarrörelse. Modern historisk forskning i Sverige* (Stockholm, 1991): 77-92.

¹⁸ Winberg, *Fabriksfolket*, 171.

¹⁹ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 64.

In what way then did the Liberal middle class believe they could help workers? Mostly, they intended to save workers from themselves, and in so doing they would also protect the middle class from dangers arising from working men and women's excesses. They saw poverty as being self-inflicted through personal weaknesses, in particular idleness, drunkenness and licentiousness. But the middle-class' motives were not purely altruistic, since another recurring theme in the rhetoric was that of the "dangerous working class." Workers were dangerous because they were considered criminal, slovenly, and downright lazy. They lacked property, which prevented them from developing a sense of responsibility. But worse: workers had unreasonable wage demands and were thus a threat to private wealth.²⁰ In the eyes of the middle class, the demand for the 8-hour workday gave evidence of the workers' "idle nature", and if implemented, would send the labouring class into even deeper misery since it was incapable of organizing its spare time in a moral and effective manner. Likewise, the rising suicide rate among workers was explained as evidence of their inability to curb unreasonable expectations rather than as a result of economic fluctuations.²¹ Skarin Frykman argues that the press highlighted vice in order to reflect and even strengthen the already widespread view that workers were somehow a different kind of people from the bourgeoisie, and that this type of journalism enabled the middle class to dismiss workers' demands for political participation.²² Thus the negative stereotyping of workers motivated the existence of two worlds, and enforced the belief that neither economic conditions nor social power structures were responsible for the miseries in the working-class quarters.²³

²⁰ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 87-88.

²¹ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 90-91.

²² Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 93, 100-101.

²³ Skarin Frykman, *Arbetarkultur*, 103.

It seems probable that Rolf Bruhn's²⁴ connection to the bourgeoisie would have hindered a strong identification with the "lower classes," despite his several-years of enforced immersion in working-class life. The sale of the boat had paid his fare across the Atlantic, but an ill-advised business venture in Chicago forced him to part with the remainder. Still a teenager, Bruhn reverted to his only marketable skill: he became a deckhand on one of the Great Lakes' boats. From there he journeyed west, often on foot and often short of work and money. He worked for a while for the Canadian Pacific Railway in Calgary; he tried logging and mining and hired on to the CPR's Arrow Lakes' boats in Revelstoke, British Columbia. In 1898 he took up a homestead at Malakwa, married Anna Treat, a Swedish-American immigrant to BC, with whom he had three children between 1903 and 1911. In 1912 Bruhn and his family abandoned the farm and moved to Salmon Arm, where Bruhn again turned to paid labour, this time in road gangs. He proved his ability and rose in the ranks, first to foreman and then to Superintendent.²⁵ During the First World War he demonstrated his organisational skills when he was in charge of an internment camp housing German-Canadians suspected of "anti-Canadian activities." In 1917, alongside with the internment work, he started a lumber business in Sicamous – R. W. Bruhn Pole & Lumber Co. – that became a financial success. Apart from the lumber business, he was president and part owner of several companies, among others the Sheep Creek Gold Mines Ltd., Zincton Mines, Tyee Consolidated Mines, and Prefabricated Buildings.²⁶

Bruhn's political climb was equally surefooted. He joined the Conservative party in 1908, was a popular alderman in Salmon Arm between 1914 and 1918, and,

²⁴ He followed his father's example and changed his name from Wallgren to Bruhn, claiming that the latter was easier to pronounce in English. Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn," 89.

²⁵ Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn," 87-88.

²⁶ "Bruhn Passes On," Salmon Arm Observer, Sept 3, 1942.

according to the political pundit and Conservative organizer Russ Walker, the Conservative Party invited him to accept the Conservative Salmon Arm nomination in 1924, which he subsequently won with a narrow margin.²⁷ He was the first Swede to be elected to the B.C. legislature and in 1931 he was given a ministerial post, a rare honour for an immigrant in this the most British of all Canadian provinces. Bruhn's popularity seemed boundless. He was soon touted as Premier Tolmie's right-hand man, and when the Conservative government floundered in 1932, the Province suggested that Bruhn should replace Tolmie as Premier, in order to save the Party.²⁸ Bruhn, however, was disillusioned with party politics and ran as a member of the Non Partisan Independent Group (NPIG) in the 1933 election. That his electorate stood by him whether he ran as a Conservative or Independent candidate shows that they too trusted his leadership abilities.²⁹ He was also appreciated in his homeland, as was evident in 1936 when the Swedish government sought to bestow on him the Swedish Order of Vasa, an order given in recognition of contributions to industry, trade, and agriculture as well as public service. The Federal government, however, would not bend its rules on allowing Canadian subjects to receive foreign decorations, which, amidst regrets, forced Bruhn to reject the Order.³⁰

Fortunately for Bruhn, his constituents' loyalty was more related to his personality and accomplishments than they were to a party affiliation, because

²⁷ Russell R. Walker, Politicians of a Pioneering Province, (Vancouver, 1969), 64. See also Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn," 2.

²⁸ Donald Keith Alper, "From Rule to Ruin: the Conservative Party of British Columbia, 1928-1954," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Victoria, 1976): 82. See also Ian D. Parker, "Simon Fraser Tolmie: The Last Conservative Premier of British Columbia," BC Studies, 11 (fall 1971): 21-36.

²⁹ Between 1924 and 1941 Bruhn won a seat in every election, getting between 36.83 (1924) and 73.25 (1928) percent of the votes.

³⁰ For insights into the Swedish Vasa Order, see Dag Blanck, "North Stars and Vasa Orders: On the Relationship between Sweden and Swedish America," in Aspects of Augustana and Swedish America: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergenoff on His 100th Year (Augustana Historical Society, 1995), 112-124. For correspondence between Rolf Bruhn and R.B. Bennett, see Rolf Bruhn to R.B. Bennett, July 31, 1936 and August 12, 1936; R.B. Bennett to Bruhn, August 5, 1936. I am indebted to Dr. Patricia Roy for this material.

Bruhn's political ideologies gave cause for confusion among friends and foes alike. The Vancouver Sun described his politics as "going in many directions simultaneously . . . a curious mixture of Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism, and Salmon Armism."³¹ He courted labour by favouring Oriental exclusion, leaning on the era's common oxymoronic respectable-racism by proudly proclaiming to have "always employed whites exclusively and [to have] adopted the eight hour day and good wages long ago."³²

In fact, his politics reflected his chequered background, the first-hand mix of middle- and working-class influence. While he remained faithful to Conservative keystones such as capitalism and was an admirer of R.B. Bennett, he also favoured public spending for make-work projects, health and unemployment insurance, increased and "more humanitarian" pension benefits, a more steeply graduated income tax, and public ownership of a variety of institutions such as a central bank and hydroelectric power.³³ During the Depression — which Premier Tolmie dismissed as "not critical," and which the Conservative Kidd Commission wanted to solve by cutting civil service salaries even further and stopping all public spending³⁴ — Bruhn was responsible for what Donald Alper calls the provincial Conservative government's "only positive action" to alleviate the effects of the Depression — the establishment of 170 work camps that paid wages only slightly below standard pay for unskilled labour.³⁵

³¹ Vancouver Sun, November 17, 1938.

³² "Two Meetings Held in Support of R.W. Bruhn," Salmon Arm Observer, June 19, 1924.

³³ "High-Lights of Independent Candidate's Platform," Salmon Arm Observer, Sept 7, 1933. See also "Constructive Speech: R.W. Bruhn Outlines Progress Shown In Sweden by Co-operative and Governmental Effort Without Undue Restrictions," Salmon Arm Observer, Nov 19, 1936.

³⁴ Robert Edmund Groves, "Business Government: Party Politics and the British Columbia Business Community, 1928-1933," (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976): 143-146.

³⁵ The Great Depression combined with a severe drought hit hard in Canada. The thousands of unemployed drifters raised the spectre of workers' revolt in the eyes of the Conservative federal government. To insure that the voices of Communist activists would go unheard, the government carted desperate and unemployed men far away to newly erected relief camps in the wilderness where

Although Bruhn's solution to the catastrophic unemployment rate at least loosely followed the federal stipulations for the Relief Act,³⁶ it was not well received by all. Bruhn's camps were soon tainted with accusations of patronage and corruption, and his seemingly reckless spending struck fear in both the federal and provincial governments. After less than three months of operation the federal government terminated the grants, which forced Bruhn to abandon his "work for wages" program. In a series of articles, the Vancouver Sun denounced the project as a lesson in chaotic spending and blatant patronage, where "not a single nail" was purchased from any hardware stores other than those run by Conservative supporters.³⁷ The Vancouver Sun's comments on Bruhn were consistently negative, and in December 1931 – when Tolmie asked Bruhn to probe patronage rumours in the party – the editor likened the exercise to a probe into "a rumor that someone had a nose growing in his face."³⁸

Bruhn's advocacy of more direct action to combat the depression confused people about exactly where on the political scale he stood. In the 1933 election, his seeming support of left-wing policies tempted some members of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) to offer Bruhn - now running as Independent³⁹ - the opportunity to canvass on the CCF platform. George Abbott notes that Bruhn spoke

they worked, often for as little as \$8.00 a month. For good accounts of the depression, see John Herd Thompson and Alan Seager, Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, Toronto, 1985; Barry Broadfoot, Ten Lost Years, 1929-1939: Memoirs of Canadians Who Survived the Depression (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1973); and Bill Waiser, Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946 (Calgary: Fifth house Ltd., 1995).

³⁶ The Relief Act allocated money to the provinces with the stipulation that they create work camps for the unemployed. The act intended to stifle Communist protest actions, and threatened prison terms and fines for those who refuse to comply. James Struthers, No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian State 1914-1941 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983)

³⁷ The Vancouver Sun, November 25, 1931, November 26, 1931 and November 28, 1931. See also Margaret Ormsby, British Columbia: A History, first published 1958 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971), and Struthers No Fault of Their Own.

³⁸ Vancouver Sun, December 7, 1931.

³⁹ The Depression proved too much of a challenge, and the Conservative Party was torn apart from internal dissension. Bruhn did not consider Tolmie's platform progressive enough to solve the situation, and when Tolmie refused to heed Bruhn's advice to form a Union government, represented by the "best men regardless of party affiliation," Bruhn resigned his post. See Alper, "From Rule to Ruin," 80, and "Bruhn Resigns," Salmon Arm Observer, June 29, 1933.

highly of Reverend Robert Connell, who sought to lead the CCF toward a more moderate path and eventually abandoned the CCF in order to start the Social Reconstructives, a social democratic alternative that split the left without becoming a serious political contender.⁴⁰ The press circulated rumours of duplicity⁴¹ and was equally busy printing denials from both Bruhn and the CCF leadership. He admitted having received invitations from CCF organiser Col. Lyons and getting letters from “influential supporters of the CCF” urging him to run as their candidate, but denied having ever considered such a step.⁴² Bruhn dismissed the CCF program as “impracticable and unworkable,” and in 1936 he insinuated that it was Communism under a different name and cautioned against the “danger of having an entirely new system foisted upon [the province].”⁴³

Despite his dire warning about the CCF, Bruhn extolled the virtues of the Swedish Social-Democratic government’s economic and labour policies. In 1936 he argued, “the depression was over some time ago . . . [and] our many unemployed are the product of . . . the machine age and of our blunders and mishandling of our affairs.” The way to undo these “blunders” was to reopen the road camps and to pay the workers a “reasonable wage” in order to start money circulating in the general economy. If that did not solve the situation, he felt the House should follow the example of the Swedish Social Democratic government and put in place a “compromise system of Socialism and Capitalism.” He argued that Sweden’s constructive program of “moderate government control” succeeded because Swedish-

⁴⁰ Abott 93. For a closer look at Rev. Robert Connell and the CCF, see Walter D. Young, “Ideology, Personality and the Origin of the CCF in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 32 (Winter 1976-77): 139-162.

⁴¹ Bruhn was accused of attempting to convince CCF candidate George Sterling to step down “to leave the field clear” for Bruhn. See “Independent Candidate Reiterates Stand,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Oct 19, 1933 and “Letters to the Editor,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Sept 28 and Oct 5, 1933.

⁴² “Independent Candidate Reiterates Stand,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Oct 19, 1933. See also “R.W. Bruhn Gives a Spirited Address,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Nov 2, 1933.

⁴³ See “Independent Candidate Reiterates Stand,” Oct 19, 1933, and “Constructive Speech,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Nov 19, 1936.

style socialism was run by “realists who [did not] enter upon any fantastic schemes.”⁴⁴ Thus, Bruhn’s defence of Swedish social democracy did not imply that he had become one with the socialist ideology, but that he looked for pragmatic solutions that would help offset the Depression while doing a minimum of damage to Canadian capitalism.

Luckily for Bruhn, the voters did not seem to worry overly about exactly where on the political map he had pitched his camp, because voters faithfully checked his name on the ballot with seemingly scant regard for right- or left-wing policies. It is suggestive, therefore, that after Bruhn’s death from a massive heart attack in 1942 the subsequent by-election showed a marked change in voting patterns for the district. In Bruhn’s first election campaign in 1924, which also was Salmon Arm’s first year as an electoral district, the results were fairly evenly distributed. Three candidates, F. Wilcox (Liberal), W. Warren (Provincial Party), and Rolf Bruhn (Conservative), each received between 30% and 36% of the vote.⁴⁵ The people of Salmon Arm were well pleased with their new member, however, and in subsequent elections Bruhn won with much greater margins. In 1928 when he ran against the only other candidate, J. Smart (Liberal), Bruhn won 73.25% of the votes. Not even Bruhn’s resignation from Tolmie’s Conservative government and running as an Independent ruffled the confidence of the voters. Thus, in 1933, when four different candidates competed for Salmon Arm votes, Bruhn still won with a wide margin over his nearest competitor.⁴⁶ The trend continued in the 1937 election, and when Bruhn returned to the Conservative fold in 1941, 60.22% of Salmon Arm constituents supported him.

⁴⁴ “Constructive Speech,” *Salmon Arm Observer*, Nov 19, 1936.

⁴⁵ The result was: Rolf Bruhn 36.83%, W. Warren 32.99%, and R. Wilcox 30.18%. A total of 2498 persons voted.

⁴⁶ Rolf Bruhn (Non Partisan Independent Group) received 44.82%, J. Colley, Liberal, 29.46%, B. Samson (United Front) 5.71%, and G. Sterling (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) won 20.01%

By then Bruhn's health was faltering. As the seriousness of his disease became evident, Bruhn correctly predicted to his friend Russell Walker that the Conservatives would lose the Salmon Arm seat in the event of his death. Walker suggests that Bruhn's sympathetic position on the vulnerability of immigrants won him the Finnish-Canadian votes in the riding,⁴⁷ and that these voters supported the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation when Bruhn was out of the picture.⁴⁸ The by-election on 25 November 1942 following Bruhn's death on 30 August that year suggests that the Salmon Arm constituents had voted for the person rather than the party. Former Bruhn supporters now distributed their votes between the right and the left of the political spectrum. If anything, the result leaned toward the left, since George Stirling (CCF) won with a slight margin over the Coalition Party candidate, Cyril Thompson.⁴⁹ Some caution is needed here, however, since a general left wind was felt in the early 1940s.⁵⁰ In all of Canada this was expressed through a growing militancy among workers with an upswing in strikes that peaked in 1943.⁵¹ In the only other two by-elections in B.C. in the same period, the CCF increased from 31.24 to 51.17 percent of the vote in the 1943 election in Revelstoke, and it remained fairly fixed on 26 percent in New Westminster's 1945 by-election.⁵² While it might be that the electorate was left in a political quandary, undecided and insufficiently educated about right and left party ideology, it is more likely that Bruhn's actions during the

of the votes. See Elections BC, web site:

http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/toc.html.

⁴⁷ For instance, during the Great Depression Bruhn kept many of his employees working and he left instructions with his staff always to provide some food to the homeless and hungry that came to his door asking for assistance. Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn, Pioneer and Politician," 89.

⁴⁸ Walker, *Politicians of a Pioneering Province*, 65.

⁴⁹ George Stirling received 53.10% of the votes against Cyril Thompson's 46.90%.

⁵⁰ As noted in Chapter 2, the Liberal and Conservative parties counteracted the surge from the left by forming a coalition in 1941. See page 41.

⁵¹ Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991*, (Toronto, 1992), 278.

⁵² Elections BC, web site: http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/toc.html.

depression persuaded both the working and the middle classes that he had the power and the will to create jobs.

Thus, Bruhn's political strategies were successful and very similar to the Liberal philanthropy in his native Göteborg. Just as Liberal stratagems in his hometown mollified workers and stalled a left-wing political development so did Bruhn's "Red Tory" policies retard the spread of the CCF. While he genuinely sympathised with unemployed workers, he was more interested in preserving the social order by providing enough relief to prevent young and intelligent workers from turning to radical parties that threatened to upset capitalism. With several domestic servants looking after his Shuswap home and a specially designed swimming pool in the back yard of his Vancouver residence, Rolf Bruhn enjoyed the benefits of economic success.⁵³ Emigrating and travelling alone combined with his own personal success in business most likely strengthened his belief in individualism while his many years as an unskilled worker made him sensitive to working-class needs and reasoning.

Olof Hansson is another example of an impoverished immigrant who "made good" in Canada, even serving as the Swedish Vice Consul of British Columbia in 1916 and later the Swedish Consul of British Columbia in 1920. His background, however, was much different from that of Rolf Bruhn. Hansson grew up in the north-western province of Härjedalen, at the Norwegian border, an area which was at the other end of the industrial spectrum from Göteborg. Around the turn of the century Härjedalen's economy depended on forest companies that hired local workers to harvest the timber. While Härjedalen was a non-industrialized area, a proletariat had emerged when large corporations bought timber land from impoverished farmers and

⁵³ Abbott, "Rolf Wallgren Bruhn, Pioneer and Politician," 90.

cottagers in order to benefit from the increased exports of wood products in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Negligible industrialization went hand-in-hand with isolation in this least populated of all Swedish provinces. By the late 1920s forest companies owned more than one third of the viable timber land, but rather than creating sub industries the majority of the timber was processed on the coast.⁵⁵ Indeed, Härjedalen - mockingly referred to as “the province that God forgot” - was so exclusively rural that it did not even enjoy the services of a small town.⁵⁶ Hansson’s village was:

a collection of grey houses with turf roofs upon where birches grew to a man’s height. It was a road-less village, one nearly singularly lacking cultivated land. The people reaped their crops out of meadows and marshes, herded cattle during summer and worked in the logging industry during winter. It was not possible to foresee any bright future for this mountain village in the 1880s.⁵⁷

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent Olof Hanson was familiar with socialistic ideals as forwarded by the International Order of the Good Templar or the union movement. Mats Rolén shows that while the IOGT grew strong in the near-by province of Jämtland, it met with more resistance in Härjedalen, perhaps due to the isolation and the logging environment that encouraged a subculture where alcohol consumption played a significant role. Still, Rolén notes that the IOGT did have some success in Hanson’s home parish, Tännäs, which might account for Hanson’s later

⁵⁴ Birger Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd. En rapport från Skogsriket 1850-1950* (Östersund, 1984), 7. Ella Johansson gives a more detailed account of the change of ownership in the northern forests, and speaks of the ensuing debate whether small farmers or large corporations would be of better benefit to the Swedish forests. See Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner. Maskulinitet och modernitet i norrländskt skogsarbete* (Lund, Sweden), 25-26.

⁵⁵ Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd*, 17. Even as late as the 1950s, the degree of industrialization was the lowest in Sweden; in 1880 Härjedalens population was 9 044, and by 1953 it was 14 577.

⁵⁶ The nearest urban centre was in the neighbouring province of Jämtland. See, “Härjedalen - landskapet som Gud gömde” *The Swedish Press*, September 24, 1942.

⁵⁷ Per Nilsson Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga: Olof Hansson från Tännäs,” issue 1. (No page, unknown title.) Held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

advocacy for sobriety among Swedish loggers in British Columbia.⁵⁸ Likewise, as noted in Chapter 5, while poverty and the company monopoly nourished a strong hatred against the large forest companies, unions did not spring easily in this region.⁵⁹ Moreover, most workers internalized an ingrained work ethic, where the term *arbetskarl*, a working man, held a deeper meaning that connected the individual to respectability and adulthood.⁶⁰ The employers skilfully played on this working-class ethic, labelling strike breakers as “willing” workers, which implied that strikers were “unwilling” workers, a stamp that insulted their integrity and masculinity as family providers and workers. Under these circumstances, “striking was described in these areas as treason.”⁶¹ While workers of Härjedalen’s northern neighbour, Jämtland, relatively rapidly became organized, in particularly in the sawmill districts, organizers found Härjedalen more troublesome. However, as in Göteborg, once labour politics became entrenched by workers in the mid to late 1920s, “the labour movement found this province to be one of its mightiest strongholds.”⁶²

Olof Hansson’s childhood was also a world away in class and status from that of Rolf Bruhn’s. Hansson was the oldest of nine children who were raised in a crofter’s one-room cottage. In summer, seven-year-old Olof herded goats on uncultivated meadows and during the winter months he delivered mail, walking long distances between lonely villages. Per Nilsson Tannér offers a dramatic description on how Olof’s mother anxiously waited for his return, dreading the distant howl of roaming

⁵⁸ Mats Rolén, “Nykterhetsrörelsens genombrottsstid i Jämtlands län,” *Alkohol och nykterhet. Aktuell forskning i Norden presenterad vid ett symposium i Uppsala*, ed. Anders Gustavsson (Uppsala, 1989), 250-255. For Hansson’s opinions on alcohol abuse in British Columbia, see Carl Ernest Carlsson, “Life Story,” unpublished manuscript held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

⁵⁹ See page 136-137.

⁶⁰ Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner*, 22. While the direct translation is ‘workman,’ the term has a positive connotation and only applies to strong and skilful workers who do not shun hard work. All workers, therefore, are not *arbetskarlar*. Note also that there were similar distinctions for *arbetskvinnor* (working women) and *arbetsmänniskor* (working people).

⁶¹ Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd*, 75-76.

⁶² Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd*, 32-33.

packs of wolves as the early evening winter darkness fell over the forest.⁶³ This description was neither one of sentimentality nor romance: theirs was a time and a place when survival depended on ingenuity, and death was a constant and acknowledged companion even with the strong and the healthy.⁶⁴ When Olof became a bit older, he looked for more permanent work. It is unsure what his age was when he first worked as a ‘helper’ in the logging camps, but old-timers described him as “no more than a fist high.”⁶⁵ Ethnographer Ella Johansson claims that in these northern forest-industry communities, boys as young as seven followed their fathers and other men out to the logging camps. This, she claims, was not so much an exploitation of child workers as it was a socialization of children. “Children’s first years in the forest were not intended to produce logs, but to produce new, small men.”⁶⁶ In 1902, twenty-year-old Olof worked as a full-time logger,⁶⁷ but the work was described as “underpaid slave work” and in order to break free, he borrowed money from a relative and bought a ticket to the United States of America.⁶⁸

At the time of his emigration, Hansson had a minimum of formal education or occupational training.⁶⁹ Like Rolf Bruhn, Hansson never shone in school. But while the former abandoned a grammar-school education, Hansson never progressed beyond elementary school. His schoolteacher remembered him as being quick and witty but too preoccupied with his own thoughts to be the brightest light in the class; perhaps

⁶³ Nilsson Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue 1.

⁶⁴ Letters sent to Märta Sundström, who lived in a small village not far from Olof Hansson, attest to the precariousness of life. Most correspondents habitually set off by hoping that the recipient was still alive, and consistently made even short-term future plans subject to surviving the week, month or year ahead. See letter collection, “Röising, Edna” 10:10:10B, 1901-1905, held at the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

⁶⁵ Nilsson Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue 1.

⁶⁶ Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner*, 155-57. Individual forest workers, however, remembered doing actual labour in the camps at the age of eleven and twelve. See Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd*, 20.

⁶⁷ Nilsson Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue 1.

⁶⁸ ”’Timmerkungen’ i Vancouver ger sin hembygd 2 miljoner,” *Stockholms Tidningen*, December 13, 1954.

the need to help support the family weighed more heavily on his mind than did memorizing the geography of Sweden or the exploits of past kings.⁷⁰ As a new immigrant in North America, he therefore had few exploitable skills to fall back on. He worked on farms in Minnesota and North Dakota, was a railroad navvy in Idaho, did gardening in Spokane and worked in a planing mill in Montana. In time, he started to chafe at his inability to compete on a more skilled level with fellow workers. With that realization his priorities in the educational arena changed. Whenever opportunity arose, Olof enrolled in school to improve his formal training. He took English-language lessons in Idaho, and – more importantly – enrolled in a commerce course at the Northwestern Business College in Spokane, Washington, while supporting himself by working as a stable hand.⁷¹ By dropping one “s” in Hansson, he Americanized the spelling of his name. Still, he was not satisfied, and started to have misgivings about realizing the myth of the United States as the land of opportunity. In 1906, he was tired of waged labour and moved to Manville, Alberta, where he took a 160-acre homestead.⁷²

For three long years Hanson worked the farm. He built a house and a barn. During the spring he seeded the land by hand, and in the fall he harvested. Perhaps because he was still without a wife and children who could shoulder parts of the labour, he discovered that the Alberta farm ate his savings and the work was “endless slavery.”⁷³ He had to subsidize the homestead with waged labour, and as winter

⁶⁹ Formal education was not the first priority in these isolated areas. Around the turn of the century schooling in Härjedalen was sporadic and elementary, with generous leave for family work. Nilsson, *Vårt dagliga bröd*, 21.

⁷⁰ Nilsson-Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue 1.

⁷¹ Charles L. Shaw, “Olof Hanson’s Success in Business is Tribute to Industry and Sense,” *The Financial Post*, April 27, 1928. See also “Tännäs-pojken som blev miljonär,” Olof Seaholm’s Collection [hereon OSC], Box 76, University of British Columbia Special Collection [hereon UBC SC], 1.

⁷² “Tännäs-pojken som blev miljonär,” OSC, UBC SC, 1.

⁷³ Per Nilsson-Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue III (Undated newspaper clipping held by Växjö Institute of Emigration). See also “Tännäs – byn vid de sju bergens sydslutningar nära många

closed in he was again working as a faller, this time in northern British Columbia for one of the many outfits that delivered ties to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. It was somewhat more profitable than farming, but Olof felt he still could improve on his fortune. One day he went to the Grand Trunk manager and asked for a logging contract. The railroad official sent the young immigrant packing, but had to change the tune when Hanson delivered a load of ties, free of charge and of top quality.⁷⁴ From then on the Grand Trunk offered Hanson progressively larger contracts. Hanson still had not reached his dream goal, however, and after an educated guess on where the railway would end, he sold his small contracting outfit, hiked on foot to the coast and invested in as much land as he could afford near the ramshackle fishing town of Prince Rupert.⁷⁵ His guess paid off, and his fortune was secured. Hanson soon had the second largest payroll in central British Columbia,⁷⁶ and subsequently became owner and part owner of several businesses, such as Hanson Lumber & Timber, the Royal Fish Company, Massett Canneries Co. Ltd, and a real estate company, Dybhavn and Hanson Ltd.⁷⁷ In 1911 he married Martha Johnson, a recent Swedish immigrant from Jämtland, the neighbouring province of Härjedalen, and when he eventually became father of two children Olof Hanson was able to project a fitting image of a solid middle-class citizen.

Olof Hanson was a member of the Lutheran Church and several social clubs including the Freemasons,⁷⁸ but he did not enter active politics until in 1930 when he

glittrande fiskevatten,” unpublished document composed by Tännäs Kyrkliga Arbetsgrupp; and “Tännäs-pojken som blev miljonär,” OSC, UBC SC, 2.

⁷⁴ Per Nilsson-Tannér, “Timmerkungens levnadssaga,” issue III

⁷⁵ “Tännäs-pojken som blev miljonär,” OSC, UBC SC, 2.

⁷⁶ Shaw, “Olof Hanson’s Success.” According to a Swedish journalist, Royal Timber and Lumber Co. employed 300 subcontractors and 2 000 workers in Prince Rupert alone. “Svensk i Canadas Parlament,” *Stockholms Dagblad*, August 19, 1930.

⁷⁷ Otto Nordling, “Swedes in Canada,” unpublished document held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

⁷⁸ He was a member of the Omineca Masonic Lodge, the Tyee Lodge, and the Valhalla Lodge. *Prince Rupert Daily News*, June 6, 1952.

ran for the federal Liberal Party. He not only won his first election, but he held his seat for fifteen consecutive years until he voluntarily retired and was the first European-born non-British subject to be elected to the Federal Parliament.⁷⁹ His success seems due to a combination of an affable personality, his role as major employer, and the support of a powerful political machine that shamelessly used propaganda and fear tactics to win over voters. He supported Swedish workers by offering work and advice, and donated money to the Swedish Press in Vancouver under the condition that his gift was anonymous.⁸⁰ In 1929 he purchased a totem pole from the Haisla band on the Kitlope River, and donated it to the Swedish Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm.⁸¹ In his greatest and last act of philanthropy, however, he bequeathed \$415,000 to the “poor” in his home parish in Härjedalen, which proved to be twice the yearly taxable income for that area.⁸²

Hanson enjoyed the economic benefits that came with his business success; however, he seemed reluctant to fully abandon his role as a worker. Despite outward symbols of economic and social success such as residences in Prince Rupert and Vancouver, and a 160-acre summer home on Lake Kathlyn, Olof habitually wore overalls at work, both when visiting logging camps and when supervising the loading of railway cars that transported his timber, much of which went to the US east coast. Clearly Hanson enjoyed the confusion his easy travel between class positions created

⁷⁹ “En svensk lantarbetare i Canadas parlament,” Ny Tid, October 15, 1942.

⁸⁰ For Swedish workers in Hanson’s camps, see Eva St Jean, “Martin i Harvered – En skogsarbetares brev från Kanada berättar,” Skogshistoriska sällskapetets Årskrift (2001), 78-89; and Carlsson, Carl Ernest, “Levnadsskildring,” 10:5:16:D, Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden. For the Swedish Press see, Olof Hanson to Matthew Lindfors, April 26, 1936, Matthew Lindfors’ Fonds [hereon MLF], Box 3, UBC SC.

⁸¹ The band has since asked for its return, which the museum granted after some negotiations. For a history of the Haisla totem pole and its return to British Columbia see Web site:

<http://www.haislatotem.org/index.html>

⁸² The yearly income for the parish was one million Swedish *kronor* and the bequest represented more than two million Swedish *kronor*. “Timmerkungen i Vancouver ger sin hembygd 2 miljoner,” Stockholms Tidningen, December 13, 1954. The event spawned several articles about Olof Hanson’s history. For example, see “Canadasvensk gav miljoner till hemsöcken,” Vestkusten, December 30,

for both new workers and visiting buyers. According to stories, he purposely allowed visiting New York lumber buyers to believe they had an intellectual advantage over this plain worker with a heavy Swedish accent. After having for a while permitted some sly jesting from the visitors, Hanson quietly revealed the extent of his holdings, which left the buyers off balance and more pliable for negotiations. According to a second story, a migrant Swedish worker mistook Hanson for a fellow worker and asked for directions to the “timber king.” Hanson pointed him to the nearby Siwash reserve. When the worker returned in anger refusing to work under a “swarthy idiot,” Hanson calmed him down by promising good work under a “white boss.” Thus Hanson was able to exploit the stereotype of the uneducated peasant immigrant to his benefit, and he also seemed to enjoy illuminating the prejudice of those who equated simple clothing with a simple mind. However, the stories also illuminate Hanson’s own prejudice and his callousness in exposing the Siwash man to the racism of the Swedish worker.⁸³

So it is clear that Hanson was a known philanthropist in the Swedish community, but it is unsure if those qualities alone brought him into power. He was supported from the start by a powerful and unabashedly Liberal press, and by a political machine that advertised nearly daily with fear propaganda against other parties, in particular the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In 1930, the Liberal Prince Rupert Daily News called Hanson’s future and “evident” election “a great day . . . [to] look forward to.”⁸⁴ Five years later, when the Liberals feared the political newcomer – the CCF – this too is reflected in editorial comments. “Why . . . waste a vote on the C.C.F.?” the editor, H.F. Pullen asked rhetorically in September, a

1954; and “’Timmerkung’ testamenterade 2 milj. Till Härjedalskommun,” Svenska Dagbladet, December 12, 1954.

⁸³ “Tännäs-pojken som blev miljonär,” OSC, UBC SC, 4-6.

⁸⁴ “And now for Hanson,” editorial, PRDN July 23, 1930.

warning that he quickly reinforced the next week: “There is nothing to be gained by returning a C.C.F. candidate . . . By voting for Hanson there is more chance of getting that two cents duty against Canadian halibut removed.”⁸⁵

With Thomas Dufferin Pattullo, the Liberal premier, as one of the owners, it is not surprising that the Prince Rupert Daily News also published what borders on propaganda from the Liberal Party. In the 1935 election, “The Political Corner” was prominently displayed on the first page of the News with the thrust of its assault directed against the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. The numbers of ads illustrate the seriousness by which they viewed the new party on the left. Leaning heavily on the two-headed spectre of enforced socialism and the “Oriental threat,” the Liberals fuelled fears on how a CCF victory would affect the local economy. In 1935, Prince Rupert was negotiating for a new pulp mill that would be financed with American money. In their zeal to convince voters the Liberal Campaign Committee gave voice to American concerns by using a fictive first person plural: “We certainly will not invest private capital in a town run by Socialists.”⁸⁶ By voting for the CCF candidate, the Liberal Party argued, Prince Rupert would therefore lose a much-needed boost to the local economy.

Together with the Conservatives, the Liberal Party also stood diametrically opposed to the CCF on a burning racial issue – the Oriental franchise in Canada – an event Liberals predicted would have dire economic repercussions for all the “white men” in British Columbia. Traditionally, B.C. Labour had lobbied for legislation that excluded Asian workers, while employers had welcomed this inexpensive source of

⁸⁵ “Unite on Hanson,” editorial, PRDN October 8, 1935.

⁸⁶ “The Political Corner: The C.C.F. Menace to Pulp Mill Project,” PRDN September 26, 1935. Similar messages appear on the front page of issues September 28, and October 1, 2, and 4.

labour.⁸⁷ When it came to suffrage rights, however, the tables were turned. In one very blunt ad, the Liberal Party stated, “It is just too bad about these Doukhobors and Asiatics but British Columbia would be well rid of all of them . . . [since] the Asiatic farmers are rapidly pushing back the white farmer and the Oriental fisherman [is] rapidly displacing the white.”⁸⁸ Wooing blue-collar workers by intertwining the perceived threat of class and race, the Liberal Party argued that the real danger came from the employers, in particular cannery operators, who manipulated Asian employees:

We all know the way the canneries exploit the Orientals in the matter of fishing and fishing licences. Knowing nothing about our politics or system of government these Asiatic fishermen (all of whom are naturalized) could be herded in droves to vote as the canneries wished.

Every white fisherman knows this and will oppose to the last ditch the granting of such franchise.⁸⁹

Ironically, while these policy makers must have enjoyed stabbing Conservatives and the CCF in one go, they ignored the fact that their rhetoric at least indirectly implicated their own candidate who was the President of the Royal Fish Company and the Massett Canneries Co. Ltd. Clearly the Liberal Party honed in on acute fears of the workers and turned a blind eye to Olof Hanson’s role as an employer both in the logging and in the fishing industries.

⁸⁷ Patricia Roy argues that employers initially supported Asian labour from an economic standpoint, believing they were essential in building the nation. The labour movement, on the other hand, argued that competition from low-paid Asian workers was detrimental to B.C. workers, to the point of delaying immigration of white settlers. Both groups thus expressed racist arguments that had strong economic motivations. Still, internal difficulties in the labour movement combined with a sense that the Asian threat was neutralized, dampened labours hostilities after 1914; by the 1930s, anti-Asian rhetoric had mostly disappeared from political, business and labour groups. Patricia Roy, White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants 1858-1914 (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), viii-x; and Patricia Roy, The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41 (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), Chapters 1 and 5.

⁸⁸ “The Political Corner: The C.C.F. and the Asiatic,” PRDN, October 3, 1935.

⁸⁹ “The Political Corner: The CCF and the Oriental,” PRDN October 5, 1935. The Chinese work force has nineteenth-century roots. Patricia Roy argues that in the 1870s, “Only Indians and Chinese would accept the low pay, unpleasant working conditions and uncertainties of the short season.” Roy, White Man's Province, 41.

The question remains unanswered if Olof Hanson, president of a successful salmon cannery and the employer of at least one Chinese worker,⁹⁰ agreed with such generalizations. Swedish newspapers tended to describe him as “radical” without explaining how they reached that conclusion.⁹¹ But if Hanson had radical inclinations, he kept them to himself. During election campaigns he rather stressed his financial successes, and suggested that as a member of the Parliament he could use his business skills to enrich northern BC. This immigrant from the least business-like provinces in all of Sweden thus argued that a business-minded government was the most likely to succeed in combating the Depression. He favoured old-age pensions, opposed immigration until the economy improved, and spoke against unemployment insurance. As for programs to alleviate massive unemployment, he believed that restrictions on immigration and a reduced pension age were preferable to government handouts. “He was in favor of all these things being worked out along business lines.”⁹² Surely, such public announcements made his lapel an unlikely site for the radical tag.

The strength of his electoral support indicates that Hanson’s employees trusted his capacity to improve the economic situation in BC, but even so he did not lack detractors. He seems to have avoided public-speaking tours, perhaps in an attempt to conceal ineptitude in that department. During his first election campaign he was ridiculed for his Swedish accent, even accused of being unable “to speak the English language.”⁹³ The Liberal editor was quick to point out that while “Mr. Hanson [wa]

⁹⁰ A Swedish immigrant worker, Martin Johansson, quit Olof Hanson’s camp in Decker Lake at least in part because he disliked the food the Chinese cook prepared. See Martin Johansson to Folke Johansson, Houston, November 19, 1928, “Martin i Harvered – Brev från lyckans förlovade land,” held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

⁹¹ *Ny Tid* described Hanson as having a “sympathetic personality and a radical disposition,” and claimed that he was the “radicals’ candidate.” “En svensk lantarbetare i Canadas parlament,” *Ny Tid*, October 15, 1942.

⁹² *PRDN* July 22, 1930.

⁹³ *PRDN* July 23, 1930.

not a particularly fluent speaker . . . he [wa]s a businessman who ha[d] a habit of getting what he [went] after.”⁹⁴ The pseudonym “Scandinavian” noted bitterly that some English-Canadians “would not vote for Hanson because he came from Sweden” and therefore in their minds he was a “squarehead” who was less intelligent than English-origin Canadians. This, the writer argued, was pure ignorance since “Swedes [we]re just as good as the others.”⁹⁵ Perhaps with the large Scandinavian electorate in mind, the Conservative newspaper Omenica Herald refrained from derogatory comments regarding Hanson’s nationality, but concentrated on pointing to his avoidance of public meetings and his evident lack of oratorical skills.⁹⁶ In 1935, the Herald referred to him as an “amateur speaker,” and claimed that by appearing, he did “more harm to [the Liberal] cause than good.”⁹⁷ Still, despite the large numbers of Scandinavians in his electoral district, Olof Hanson did not draw on his Swedish heritage either in his business or his political life.⁹⁸ Rather than counting on ethnic support, it was a combination of an inherent talent for business, a capacity for hard work, the good luck of being at the right place and time, and the insight into how use these circumstances to his advantage that guaranteed his successes. Moreover, his individualistic experiences as a new immigrant likely made him less supportive of a political organization that encouraged group ownership before that of the individual.

But while Bruhn and Hanson succeeded as individuals and only trusted their own abilities either as immigrants, businessmen or politicians, other Swedes followed a much more group-related approach. Seventeen years old and under the occupational listing of ‘farmhand’ (*dräng*), Oscar Eliasson left Långasjö county in the province of

⁹⁴ PRDN July 26, 1930.

⁹⁵ PRDN July 25, 1930.

⁹⁶ Omenica Herald, July 2, 1930.

⁹⁷ Omenica Herald, October 9, 1935.

⁹⁸ On the contrary, on several occasions he besought his countrymen to trim their ties to the old country. During the Second World War, he suggested that Swedes should forego their Swedish

Småland in 1926. Eliasson was part of a group migration, travelling directly to a specific destination in British Columbia where members from his home parish had already created a working-class community. As with the other two, Eliasson's background is one of extreme poverty, but rather than attempting to establish himself as a businessperson, he sided with the labour movement and became deeply engaged both with the union and with Canada's social-democratic party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.

Eliasson came from Kronoberg county in the province of Småland, and participated in the large group migration from Långasjö that was discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. As noted, many of these men worked on the railway, but while the province of Småland developed a railway network in the 1920s and 1930s, agriculture and forestry were the main industries. Historian Lennart Johansson claims that because these two dominated the industry long into the twentieth century, Kronoberg's county was one of the weakest areas for the labour movement.⁹⁹ As noted in Chapter 3, family-operated farms dominated agriculture at the time of Eliasson's emigration. Most farms were small to mid size, surviving on grain production in the summer and small-scale logging in the winter. In contrast to Härjedalen, Småland's forest industry was controlled by farmers on privately owned land rather than by large companies on private or Crown land, and the collected output only fed sawmills that produced building material for local use. Other industries were glass factories and some paper and iron works.¹⁰⁰ Hence, the

background and view themselves as foremost Canadians in order to create a united Canada. *Scandinavian Post*, "Olof Hanson Voices Plea for United Canada," May 11, 1944.

⁹⁹ Lennart Johansson, ed., *En historia om Kronobergs län i mångtusenårigt perspektiv* (Kronobergsboken, 1999-2000), 153.

¹⁰⁰ Olof Nordström ed., *Det moderna Sverige: Götaland syd*, (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1970) 143-147.

occupational self-description of the immigrants followed closely the domination of the agricultural industry.

Perhaps due to the family-oriented agricultural base, the labour movement made few advances in Småland. In the late nineteenth century the Swedish labour movement coined the expression, “the darkest of Småland,”¹⁰¹ to describe the difficulties union organizers and prohibitionists encountered in that area. The Conservative party dominated until the mid-1930s when a rightwing agrarian party became the strongest political party in Kronoberg’s county.¹⁰² It was difficult for Socialists to win support. When the Social-Democratic orator, F.E. Elmgren, visited Algutsboda during a speaking tour in 1905, a group of farmers “howled like wolves” in order to drown his voice.¹⁰³ Indeed, farmers had a tradition of opposing the labour movement in Sweden. The intellectual unionists in the twentieth century railed against the “endless stupidity of the uneducated farmers.” One unionist remembered bitterly that these tillers of the soil “had no other thought than to sow and harvest. They were social illiterates. They could not imagine that there existed people who were worse off than they were. Who had nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep.”¹⁰⁴ As long as Småland lacked a strong industrial base, it was difficult for the labour movement to make inroads.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ The expression was derived from Henry M Stanley’s book, *In the Darkest of Africa*, which was published in Sweden in 1890. An early Swedish socialist first used the metaphor to refer to Swedish Conservatives in racist terms, where the least progressive was the “blackest native.” Since the representative from Kronoberg’s county was described as one of the most retrogressive, the metaphor extended and Småland became the “darkest” of provinces. Lennart Johansson, *Landet kring sjöarna*, 10.

¹⁰² In 1924, farmers represented both the Conservative party and the Agrarian party, while the two social democrats were a railway engineer and a railway fireman. In the 1928 election the Conservatives won twice the number of votes as the social democrats, while the social democrats together with the agrarian farmers’ party were stronger after 1936. Johansson, *Landet kring sjöarna*, 316-17.

¹⁰³ Johansson, *Landet kring sjöarna*, 308-9.

¹⁰⁴ Ella Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner*, 116.

¹⁰⁵ The notion that farmers were retrogressive seems to have made “common sense.” Martin Johansson writes about his surprise when he heard of a farmer protest during the Great Depression in Canada: “Farmers here in the country are starting to realise they are cheated by the capitalists. . . . [A]t a meeting for farmers in Saskatchewan they played and sang the International rather than the national

The prohibitionist movement was initially welcomed in Småland in the late nineteenth century, but when middle-class leaders and farmers started to see the movement as a tool for workers who demanded democratic rights, the resistance against reform grew. While the clergy did not deny that IOGT combated drunkenness, they argued that such sobriety had little to offer. “The Goodtemplar [Order] has turned to political and religious radicalism, making it shameful to be a Goodtemplar,” declared one minister.¹⁰⁶ It is illustrative, therefore, that the ultra-conservative Schartuan movement was as strong in this province as it was in Bohuslän, with a similar following among the working people.¹⁰⁷ As late as 1927, the chair of an annual Church assembly referred to prohibitionists as “Anti Christ,” and claimed not to want to see any such organization in Kronoberg county.¹⁰⁸ Johansson’s argument that the strength and the fundamentalist propensity of the Lutheran church in this area blocked prohibitionists from developing into a radical and powerful mass movement as they did in many other places in Sweden, thus mirrors Frykman’s analysis of Göteborg.

Despite these difficulties, unions did emerge even if they were weaker than in many other places in Sweden. The “labour aristocracy” in Småland – the glass blowers – organized in the early 20th century, especially around 1907-8. Paper-mill and ironworkers also organized in the 1910s, although the Lockout and Great Strike of 1909 crushed most of these organizations.¹⁰⁹ The Långasjö parish that Eliasson came from lacked industries except for small workshops, mostly carpentry, so there

anthem and instead of Canada’s flag they raised the RED flag. [It was] the first time in the world history that farmers have raised the red flag, except of course in Russia.” See, “Dear Relatives,” Savona, BC, March 6, 1931, in “Martin in Harvered – Letters From the Promised Land, 1928 –1934,” a letter collection held by the Swedish Institute of Emigration in Växjö, Sweden.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Johansson, *Landet kring sjöarna*, 307.

¹⁰⁷ Winberg, *Fabriksfolket*, 154.

¹⁰⁸ Johansson, *Landet kring sjöarna*, 138-40.

were no unions in the area during his time in Sweden. As Chapter 3 has shown, however, the population was very mobile and although Eliasson never worked outside of Långasjö even for short periods, he most likely was in contact with others who had experienced unions in nearby glass factories or industries in cities such as Kalmar.

Oscar Albin Eliasson, who emigrated in 1926 at the age of seventeen, thus left Kronoberg's county more than ten years before agricultural workers fully supported social democracy. He was the older of two children, and grew up on a small farm amidst deep poverty. Oscar Eliasson's father, Elias Petersson had also emigrated as a youth, working in an undisclosed region and occupation in the United States between 1882 and 1908. It is debatable if Elias' journey was a financial success since he only became a landowner of a small farm with poor financial returns,¹¹⁰ which he eventually abandoned.¹¹¹ Lars Lindahl suggests that return migrants often imported socialistic ideas from America to Sweden,¹¹² but while it is possible that Elias Petersson was introduced to radical labour groups during his stint in the United States, this remains unproven. Regardless, Oscar most certainly was raised on stories of previous emigrants, and he became seriously interested in Canada when Bernhard Johansson, an earlier emigrant and section foreman in Canal Flats, returned home for a visit in late 1925. The visits and discussions with Bernhard Johansson bore fruit,

¹⁰⁹ Johansson, ed., Landet kring sjöarna, 309-12. This lookout was nation wide and delivered a crippling blow to most Swedish union organizations. For an account of its repercussions, see Åmark, Facklig makt och fackligt medlemskap.

¹¹⁰ Out of 183 return migrants, 145 had worked in the agricultural sector in Småland prior to leaving, while only 14 were connected to agricultural work in North America; after their return, 114 returned to farming. John Johansson writes that returnees commonly purchased a farm with their savings. Accordingly, returning emigrants to Långasjö bought 85 farms of varying size. John Johansson, En Smålandssocken emigrerar En bok om emigrationen till Amerika från Långasjö socken i Kronobergs län, (Växjö, Sweden, 1967), 814. Out of 125 immigrants who returned to Sweden from British Columbia, 53 bought a farm shortly after arrival in Sweden and 11 persons eventually bought or inherited farms a few years after their return. See "Långasjö" database.

¹¹¹ Johansson, En Smålandssocken emigrerar, 135.

¹¹² Lindahl argues that the labour movement in the United States influenced ordinary workers in Sweden, while Swedish social democrat leaders took their inspiration from Germany. Ingvar Henricsson and Hans Lindblad, Tur och retur Amerika. Utvandrare som förändrade Sverige (Stockholm, 1995), 170-180.

and when Bernhard returned to British Columbia in March 1926, Oscar Eliasson and several other youths joined him.

True to tradition, Bernhard helped Oscar settle in, provided him with his first employment as a section man for the CPR, and possibly also introduced him to union meetings.¹¹³ As with so many other Långasjö migrants, within a few years Oscar was promoted to section foreman, and eventually transferred to the CPR headquarters in Cranbrook. The information about Oscar's further advancement is hazy, but when the CPR offered him a yet another promotion in 1950, Oscar demurred, citing fulltime work as a union organizer and ombudsman. He had joined the union very soon after immigrating and became actively involved in almost every aspect of the union work. He became vice general chairman of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees in 1951 and was expected to rise even further, perhaps – a local writer muses - eventually to become the President of the union. Tragically, during a union business-trip to Calgary Eliasson contracted meningitis, which led to his death at 44 years of age.¹¹⁴

As for Eliasson's political career, it was neither as protracted nor as successful as those of Rolf Bruhn and Olof Hanson. It is clear, however, that Oscar was attracted to socialism early. He told the weekly CCF paper, the Federationist, that he was a former member of the Socialist Party of Canada, but that he transferred to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1933, when the Socialist Party of Canada (B.C. section), the Reconstruction Party (formerly the League for Social Reconstruction), and affiliated organizations coalesced to form the B.C. section of the CCF. He was an active member, holding the position of Secretary for the Cranbrook CCF club, serving

¹¹³ A photograph of sixteen members at a union meeting in 1919 depicts thirteen from Småland, two from other parts of Sweden, and one member from England. Johansson, En Smålandssocken emigrerar, 409. This is suggestive of the high enrolment of Långasjö migrants to the union.

¹¹⁴ Johansson, En Smålandssocken emigrerar, 520-21.

as its President for three years, and also serving as the Secretary of the District Council.¹¹⁵ In 1941, he ran as the CCF candidate in Cranbrook but the Conservative candidate, Frank Green, snatched the victory by only 17 votes.¹¹⁶ Although Eliasson continued to be active in the party,¹¹⁷ he decided that under those circumstances his chances of winning were too slim to warrant the effort. Instead, Eliasson concentrated on union and municipal offices, serving for a number of years as a trustee of the Cranbrook School Board.¹¹⁸

Eliasson's 1941 election campaign suffered both from the lack of a powerful press support and from a CCF promotional campaign that was curiously vague. While the Salmon Arm Observer and the Prince Rupert Daily News provided unstinting support to Rolf Bruhn and Olof Hanson, Cranbrook lacked that kind of media and CCF perhaps lacked the necessary funds for an extensive election campaign.¹¹⁹ The Cranbrook Courier, a weekly paper that provided community information, advertising, and with only a couple of pages devoted to news and politics was hardly in a position, even if it was so willing, to become anyone's political voice.

It is difficult to get a good grip on Eliasson's standpoints since these are mostly offered through general advertisements. The CCF appealed to voters by stressing that Eliasson was "a man who [was] familiar with the needs of the people. A man that . . . pledged himself to work for a better society." At one meeting that was covered by the press, Eliasson claimed to want to promote health insurance and eliminate the

¹¹⁵ "Biographies," O.A. Eliasson, Box 54-4, Angus McInnis Papers [hereafter A.M.], UBC-SC. See also Elections BC, Parties and Elections 1903-1986, http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/part1-4.html#top. A complete merger between the CCF and the SPC (BC) took place in 1935.

¹¹⁶ Oscar Eliasson received 1,548 votes, Conservative candidate Frank Green 1,615, and Liberal A.J. McGrath 1,405 votes. See Elections BC:

http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/toc.html.

¹¹⁷ He represented Cranbrook in the 1944 CCF congress in Vancouver, BC. The Swedish Press, May 4, 1944.

¹¹⁸ Svenska Pressen, July 2, 1953.

patronage system.¹²⁰ Later, in an open letter to the Swedish Press, he voiced somewhat stronger tones, chastising his fellow CCF members for their complacency. “It would have been very helpful if our members studied a bit deeper into the economic and social questions . . . that can only be explained by those who have an insight into the Marxist social development theory.”¹²¹

Indeed, evidence suggests that Eliasson’s political views were more crimson than what was acceptable to the CCF leadership. In 1945 Eliasson was expelled from the CCF because of his involvement with the Labour Progressive Party, a re-organisation of the Communist Party of Canada after the Canadian government made it legal again in the early 1940s.¹²² The core of the disagreement between Eliasson and the CCF leadership was the nomination of the CCF candidate in East Kootenay. According to the dissidents, the CCF party used un-democratic means of securing its favoured candidate, Henry Gammon against H.W. Herridge, whom a significant minority in East Kootenay supported.¹²³ When Harold Winch recommended Eliasson’s expulsion he claimed that for several years he had “been very disturbed by his opinions in favour of collaboration with the members formerly with the Communist Party, and now identified with the LPP.”¹²⁴

Eliasson might indeed have had previous experience of cooperation between parties on the left. The head of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, Aaron Mosher, formed the All-Canadian Congress of Labour in 1927, which

¹¹⁹ At the end of Oscar Eliasson’s election meetings, “collection was taken and there was sale of C.C.F. literature to help defray expenses.” The Cranbrook Courier, October 2, 1941.

¹²⁰ The Cranbrook Courier, October 2, 1941.

¹²¹ The Swedish Press, May 4, 1944.

¹²² For a description of the conception of the Labour Progressive Party, see Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 291.

¹²³ H. W. Herridge and other dissidents started the People’s Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (PCCF) after that Herridge was expelled from the party on May 12, 1945. Herridge, however, rejoined the CCF in 1948. http://www.elections.bc.ca/elections/electoral_history/part1-4.html#top

¹²⁴ “Provincial Office Discipline File 1944-46,” Harold Winch to Jessie Mendels, May 31, 1945, A.I. UBC SC.

welcomed an “unlikely alliance” of both Communists and reactionary labour groups.¹²⁵ Possibly Eliasson was only frustrated with the ongoing war between Social Democrats and Communists in the 1940s that drained the energy and resources of the CCF,¹²⁶ but it seems more likely that he was influenced by his union leader, Aaron Mosher. Dismayed by CCF’s moderate stance, Eliasson thus had, as Winch pointed out, “definitely left [the] CCF program and policy.”¹²⁷ While this information is not conclusive, it points to a political radicalism that was foreign to both farmers and agricultural workers during Oscar Eliasson’s adolescence and time of emigration. To be sure, the Sweden that Eliasson left in 1926 was radically different from that of Hanson and Bruhn. By the 1920s most unions had recouped their losses from 1909, and social democracy was getting stronger in large areas in Sweden.¹²⁸ We also know from the previous chapter that workers and farmhands in Långasjö engaged in labour migration both inside and outside of Sweden, and thus would have been influenced by left-wing ideas from other areas. In order to suggest, however, that Eliasson exported ideas from his homeland, we need to establish that a similar trend toward socialism also occurred in his home district, but this is not the case. On the contrary, Eric Elggqvist notes the absence of any left-wing political breakthrough in Långasjö before the 1930s.¹²⁹ Election results from the Långasjö parish tend to support that conclusion. In the 1924 national election, 549 Långasjö residents registered their vote. Of them, 503 voted for *Borgare- och lantmannapartiet* and *Bondeförbundet*, two conservative parties, 18 for *Frisinnade folkpartiet*, a liberal party, 26 for the social democrats, and 2 voted for the communists. This trend continued in the election after

¹²⁵ Palmer, *Working-Class Experience*, 252-253.

¹²⁶ Palmer, *Working-Class Experience*, 302. See also Walter Young’s highly critical history of internal struggle during CCF’s early years. Young, “Origin of the CCF in British Columbia.”

¹²⁷ “Provincial Office Discipline File 1944-46,” Harold Winch to Jessie Mendels, May 31, 1945, A.I. UBC SC.

Eliasson's emigration when out of 793 Långasjö voters, ninety percent chose conservative parties, two percent voted liberal, and seven percent divided their vote between the social democrats and the communists.¹³⁰ While it is possible that the minority of left-wing sympathisers in Långasjö had influenced Eliasson, a more likely scenario is that Eliasson's political consciousness was shaped by his experiences and contacts in British Columbia.

One could ask what qualities are needed to succeed in a new country. All three men were able to project the ideals of respectability that were necessary to succeed politically, particularly that of the sober family man. Thus, it is not a coincidence that all three men were married, although it is stretching the imagination to suggest that marriage was a planned strategy.¹³¹ In their own way, all three expressed sympathies to labour, Hanson overtly by retaining his right to a worker's garb, Bruhn through his Red Tory defence of fair wages, and of course Eliasson with his fulltime union work. While Rolf Bruhn at least had some social skills that allowed rapid upward mobility, Olof Hanson seems an unlikely candidate for the social, economic and political achievements that he gained.

Ivan Light and Steven Gold outline a theory that argues that in order to succeed in new environments immigrants need to possess universal social abilities that include social competence and an ability to absorb new knowledge. While these endowments are without ethnic or cultural character they include the skills and connections that give bourgeois migrants entry passes to the business world in new countries. To

¹²⁸ For example, see Klas Åmark, *Facklig makt och fackligt medlemskap. De svenska fackförbundens medlemsutveckling 1890-1940* (Lund, 1986).

¹²⁹ Eric Elqvist, *Långasjö. Försök till en sockenbeskrivning*, (Långasjö, 1938).

¹³⁰ Landsarkivet i Vadstena [Vadstena provincial archive], Länstyrelsen Kronobergs län, Landskansliet serierna A1, andrakammarval, 1924 and 1928.

¹³¹ According to Census of Canada, 36 percent of Swedish-Canadian men between 25 and 34 years old were married, while the corresponding figure for Anglo-Canadian men was 61 percent. See Census of Canada, 193, Population, Table 20, 508-509.

ensure success, immigrants need in particular four qualities, either absorbed from the home environment or gained through a class-based support network:

- 1) Human capital: the ability or willingness to work hard or to absorb education. It is connected to the home environment, but not to race or ethnicity.
- 2) Cultural capital: defined as competence in society's high-status culture, for example the ability to know to dress properly for a job interview.
- 3) Social capital: the networks of connections that allow entry in an enterprise.
- 4) Financial capital or access to money.

Light and Gold suggest that those who do not possess social capital and lack the resources to create it stand the least chance of succeeding in a capitalistic market.¹³²

If we use this model to assess our three immigrants, we find that Rolf Bruhn lacked financial resources, but he could communicate on a more subtle level with business leaders through his intimate knowledge of the bourgeois mindset. Thus, Bruhn enjoyed both the qualities outlined under human and cultural capital, and he could relatively easily obtain the social capital necessary to gain entry in larger networks of connections. To put this another way, Erik Olin Wright's Marxist class analysis makes the point that money aside, "the experience of growing up in a capitalist family of origin presents children with an example of property ownership as a viable for of economic activity that children whose parents are not self-employed may lack."¹³³

While Hanson certainly had an abundance of human capital, none of the other attributes that ensure success were easily won. Packed in Olof's baggage were determination, a natural intelligence, and an ox-like ability to work hard. Cultural, social and financial capital only came to him as a result of his business successes, and rather than relying on existing networks of connection to carry him forward, he created his very own, which he then used to help other Swedish immigrants who were less fortunate.

¹³² Ivan Light and Steven Gold, *Ethnic Economies* (San Diego, California: Academic, 2000).

¹³³ Wright, *Class Counts*, 172.

But it is not clear that economics is the only or even the most accurate measure of success. While Oscar Eliasson did not seek his fortune in the business world, he possessed all the necessary qualities of human, cultural, social and financial capital in order to succeed within his chosen group. In his community of working-class people Eliasson was every bit as resourceful and respected as were Bruhn and Hanson in theirs. His failure to become elected is not surprising considering the lack of media support, and when he turned more fully to a career within the union he found his calling. Upon arrival in British Columbia, Eliasson entered into an already established community that shared vocational and class interests. Not only would that have fostered a loyalty and empathy to his fellow workers, but for him to embark on a similar business path as Bruhn and Hanson would have necessitated turning his back on the support system and companionship of his group. Even had he gained financially it is questionable if he had regarded such an emotional sacrifice as successful.

In the end, therefore, the three men made their political choices based on their need to protect their class position in British Columbia. While the answers for the three men are at times contradictory, the immigration experience more than the cultural and social background determined their roles in the new country. None of the three men shone intellectually during their school years in Sweden; quite the opposite.¹³⁴ Yet, their exploits in Canada are evidence of keen intelligence. Rolf Bruhn had absolutely no connection to or experience of forestry in Sweden, yet it was in this industry that he built his fortune in British Columbia. Olof Hanson certainly

¹³⁴ Historians discuss whether or not emigrants represented the "cream" of European proletariat. John Johansson's study of school records from Långasjö county is therefore of interest. After translating letter grades to a point system between 1 and 24, the average emigrant reached 12.1 points while the average non-emigrant reached 12 points. Thus, he suggests that the intellectual difference between those who stayed and those who left was negligible. John Johansson, *En Smålandsocken emigrerar*, 788-789.

had a better knowledge of logging than he might have wished for in his youth, yet he only reluctantly fell back on it in order to try and realize his dream of becoming a land-owning farmer. That he succeeded beyond expectation in the forest industry had as much to do with the development of British Columbia and Hanson's instinctive abilities in business as it did with his training from home. Likewise, Oscar Eliasson's work in British Columbia had little in common with his Swedish training. All three men had in common a childhood marked with poverty; yet in their separate ways they all ended up leaders of their respective communities. The journeys of Bruhn and Hanson were notably individualistic. They were not part of a group emigration, nor did they attempt to join any previously established Swedish-Canadian settlement. The opposite was true of Eliasson. His Småland was largely a churchly, politically conservative, farming community. Yet many emigrants from this area became active members of labour unions in British Columbia. It is possible that subsequent immigrants adjusted to the social norms of the established ethnic community. Thus, it was the loyalty to the group as much as political reality that awakened their class-consciousness. As business leaders, Bruhn and Hanson both lacked many of the "capitals" necessary for financial success, in particular the vital sponsorship from the established business community, nor did they have a background of cash or credit ratings to support the initial financing. But they learned along the way, both adapting new class discourses to the ones they understood from home. Olof Hanson never forgot nor denied his peasant background, but he was able to learn the bourgeois language of business that ensured his success as an employer, politician and civil servant. For his part, Bruhn developed a deep understanding and empathy for the working class, which he used to attempt to stem the tide of socialism in British Columbia. All three men, therefore, illustrate that while emigrants certainly were

unable to wholly turn their back on their ethnic backgrounds, it was circumstances and opportunities in the host country that determined their responses.

Chapter 7: The Frontier Thesis on Sexuality and Power and Swedish Women in British Columbia

Swedish women emigrated to B.C. in much smaller numbers than did Swedish men. This creates difficulties when trying to compare behaviours before and after immigration. Women were marginalized in both countries, which puts up further barriers when assessing their place in a public arena where they were largely silenced. In Canada, however, a historical frontier society thesis of sexuality proposes that an excess of men gave women an edge because of female sexual scarcity. In one of the most debated examples of this model Jan Noel suggests that the scarcity of European women in New France gave women there more power and autonomy compared with women in France.¹ Adele Perry argues that though women in frontier British Columbia might have gained marriage wise, they lost “economic and social possibilities not contained within the

¹ “Jan Noel, “New France: Les femmes favorisées,” in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History* Second Edition (Toronto, 1991).

heterosexual nexus.”² Looking at female entrepreneurs in British Columbia, however, Peter Baskerville suggests that women in business gained both socially and economically because of their relatively low number.³ The experience of Swedish women in British Columbia seems to fit somewhere between these three theories. It is only partly true that the under representation of Swedish women in B.C. long into the twentieth century strengthened their position in family and community settings in British Columbia. As is true for women from other nationalities, the overall skewed gender distribution in B.C. made Swedish women attractive as marriage partners. And while the shortage of women also opened up opportunities for self-employment these were confined to traditional female sectors where women provided domestic-related service to men. In order to facilitate an understanding on the extent the homeland affected immigrant Swedish women in British Columbia, this chapter will first look at women’s associational and vocational involvement in Sweden and compare this with Swedish women’s position in the workplace and various societies in British Columbia.

Swedish feminist historians have isolated different and sometimes opposing trends in female political and associational participation in Sweden that can be used as a guideline when discussing their female compatriots in British Columbia. On the one hand, women in Sweden created numerous strong and long-lasting female-only political associations and unions that already in the nineteenth century actively protected the interest of working-class women. Other historians suggest that women’s true means of activism were more subtle, which caused them to be dismissed as inconsequential first by

² Adele Perry, “‘Oh, I’m just sick of the faces of men’: Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 105-106 (spring/summer 1995): 27-43.

³ Peter Baskerville, “Women and Investment in Late-Nineteenth-Century Urban Canada: Victoria and Hamilton, 1880-1901,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 80 (June 1999):

male contemporaries and later by historians who saw the male script as the only valid one and ignored female political arenas such as sewing circles or women's auxiliaries.

Some Swedish feminist historians argue that the current political involvement among women in Sweden⁴ conceals a long struggle and a begrudging acceptance of women.⁵ Men gained universal suffrage in 1907; women were not given that right until 1919.⁶ In fact, when male Social Democrats (SAP)⁷ feared that the demand for female suffrage might ultimately harm the quest for universal male suffrage, the SAP withdrew its previous support for women's right to vote.⁸

Gender conflicts sometimes crossed political lines. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women used the numerous all female Social-Democratic discussion groups to forward objectives such as the elimination of laws limiting their choices in the labour market.⁹ When male Conservatives demanded legislation to

⁴ According to an Inter-Parliamentary Union study released in March 2003, Swedish women ranked first in the world in female participation in legislatures with 43.5 per cent of the seats held by women. The same year, Canada finished 36th among 182 nations, with women retaining only 20.6 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons. Furthermore, women in Sweden were not just tokens, but the high parliamentary participation resulted in real power. In 1999, the Swedish Social Democratic government became the first in the world with a female dominance in the Cabinet with eleven women and nine men into ministerial positions. Of 301 Canadian seats, 62 are represented by women. See *Globe and Mail*, 7 March 2003, and *Library of Parliament, Information and documentation branch*, "Women in Cabinet," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/people/key/WomenCabinet.asp?Language=E&Hist=Y>, Sunday March 2 2003.

⁵ According to Gunnel Karlsson, the pattern of male dominance in Swedish politics did not turn until in a speech during the Swedish Social Democratic Worker's Party Congress in 1972, the Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme, recognized that the party itself had a responsibility for recruiting women. Gunnel Karlsson, "Social Democratic women's coup in the Swedish parliament," in Drude von der Fehr, Anna G. Jónasdóttir, and Bente Rosenbeck ed., *Is there a Nordic Feminism? Nordic feminist thought on culture and society*, (London, UK: UCL Press Limited, 1998), 44-45.

⁶ Yvonne Hirdman, "Könlös forskning." Kvinnorna och SAP ur ett genusperspektiv," *Arbetarhistoria* 52 (1989): 4. Swedish women were able to exercise that right first in the 1921 election.

⁷ The Swedish party name is *Socialdemokratiska arbetarpartiet* – SAP.

⁸ Christina Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik. En studie av svensk socialdemokrati 1880-1920* (Lund, Sweden, 1986), 150. See also Christina Carlsson-Wetterberg, ". . . ingen kvinnofråga existerar . . .": Kvinnoorganiseringen inom den tidiga arbetarrörelsen." *Arbetarhistoria* 44-45 (1987-1988): 13.

⁹ The first Social-Democratic Women's Conference convened in 1907, when sixty women's societies affiliated with the SAP. The Social-Democratic Women's Conference met every third year until 1920, when it changed its name to the Social Democratic Women's League. Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 132 and 189.

“protect” the increasing number of women in the workplace from what they believed to be an accompanying “moral decline,” Social Democratic men, concerned about competition for jobs, supported such laws while ignoring the need to protect domestic servants.¹⁰ Both Social Democratic and Conservative women objected that men, not hard work, demoralized women. Women were particularly angered by a ban on female night work. Even though it affected only a few workers, especially typesetters who enjoyed one of the few relatively well-paid occupations open to them, women complained that it implied infantilization and limited adult freedom. The SAP women pointed out that when working-class women co-operated with conservative women it was “a deadly sin,” but when male party members collaborated across party line it was “opportune politics.”¹¹ In this case, Swedish men and women formed blocs according to gender not politics, with male Social Democrats and Conservatives supporting a cause that contravened concerns of working and middle-class women.

Regardless of these complaints from Social Democratic women, women on the political right faced an even tougher battle to be acknowledged by their male peers. In fact, it is impossible to estimate the number of Conservative women prior to the second decade of the twentieth century, and it is possible that the near exclusion of women on the right caused some to become affiliated with the Social Democratic party.¹² Women were not welcomed to the Conservative election organization, *Allmänna valmansförbundet* (AVF) until 1913, which was their first inroad into mainstream right-

¹⁰ Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 232. This reasoning mirrors arguments by Canadian socialist and union worker, Helena Gutteridge, who argued that it was not employment but unemployment that posed a moral threat to women. See Susan Wade, “Helena Gutteridge: Votes for Women and Trade Unions,” in Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess ed., *In Her Own Right: Selected Essays on Women’s History in B.C.* (Victoria, B.C.: Camosun college, 1980), 196.

¹¹ Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 226.

¹² Stina Nicklasson, *Högerns kvinnor. Problem och resurs för Allmänna valmansförbundet, perioden 1900-1936/1937*, (Uppsala, 1992), 209.

wing party politics.¹³ Although Conservative women were excluded from the party itself, they developed a women's auxiliary, *Sveriges Moderata Kvinnoförbund* (Sweden's Conservative Women's Organization) in 1911 and the Conservative Women's Suffrage Association in 1917. Women on the right were also engaged in the feminist society, the *Fredrika Bremer förbundet* (FBF), charity organisations such the Red Cross, associations for Women in the Civil Service, and female auxiliaries of defense organisations. The nationalistic *Svenska Folkförbundet* was particularly useful, since it served as a political training ground for women on the political right.¹⁴ Only when the Conservative women organised a viable women's auxiliary that in a short time attracted 1500 members did male party members see it as important to consolidate the right – and to prevent women from choosing their own path, thus inviting women to join the male national organization.¹⁵ Thus, while women on the left might have been frustrated by male focused agendas, they were still in a much stronger position when it came to their own political party than were their sisters on the right.

Working-class women in Sweden were also active in the union movement. Swedish women organized both within male-dominated unions and in female-only locals.¹⁶ Since the Swedish labour movement encouraged industrial unions, unskilled workers organized to a considerable extent. This also affected women who started to unionize as early as 1880, and whose strike actions increased markedly in the 1890s.¹⁷ By 1900 nurses, schoolteachers, postal clerks, telephone operators, and academics organized

¹³ Nicklasson, *Högerns kvinnor*, 27.

¹⁴ Nicklasson, *Högerns kvinnor*, 207.

¹⁵ Nicklasson, *Högerns kvinnor*, 215.

¹⁶ More than 4000 Swedish women were registered union members in 1900, a figure that although seemingly high is an underestimation, since male-dominated union tended to keep non-gender specific records, which concealed the number of female members. Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 138.

¹⁷ Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 87.

into various national trade unions for women.¹⁸ At times women created separate unions to protest sex discrimination, as when the printers' union refused women the right to equal training while at the same time demanding that employers pay the same wages to both sexes. Women recognized that such circumstances would encourage employers to hire men only, and therefore started a separate union to protect female interests.¹⁹

It is nevertheless unclear whether women gained or lost by creating all-female organizations. The women who organized in the Swedish Confederation of Labour (*Landsorganisationen - LO*) alongside with their male comrades "received only half the strike pay and sickness or unemployment benefits of men,"²⁰ but women's separate unions tended to be on a smaller scale than traditional unions, which impaired bargaining power and caused some women to support a merger of male and female unions. But whatever strength consolidation with male-dominated unions promised, women paid in diminished political power.²¹ In 1906, *Kvinnornas Fackförbund* (The Women's Union) had 1037 members, and six of seven female delegates to the LO Union Congress belonged to it. In 1907, however, a male-dominated tailor's union launched a successful campaign to attract female workers by promising better benefits than the Women's Union could offer. The subsequent folding of the Women's Union immediately reduced the influence of women in the mainstream union movement. When the LO congress met that same year, only one female delegate participated compared with seven in the previous

¹⁸ Gunnar Qvist, Joan Acker, and Val R. Lorwin, "Sweden," in Alice H. Cook, Val R. Lorwin, and Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *Women and Trade Unions in Eleven Industrialized Countries* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 262.

¹⁹ Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 84-85.

²⁰ Qvist et al., "Sweden," 262.

²¹ In her study on LO's Women's Council, Ylva Waldemarson argues that in gender neutral organizations male needs are the norm, and all issues are addressed as if they benefit both men and women. When women organize in separate women organizations it illuminates the fact that women and men have different concerns. Ylva Waldemarson, *Kvinnor och klass – en paradoxal skapelseberättelse. LO's Kvinnoråd och makten att benämna 1898-1967*, (Arbetslivsinstitutet, Stockholm, 2000)

year. None of the six delegates from the Women's Union managed to get re-elected as LO representatives by their new union brothers. The relatively high number of women participating in the 1906 LO congress was not reached again until 1946, which suggests the termination of the Women's Union was an enormous setback for organized women.²²

It is difficult to assess why the labour movement seemingly resisted women's involvement. The feminist point of view suggests a deeper motive than political expediency. According to one explanation, men's profound resistance against politically active women was tied to "love, sexuality, [and] the heterosexual 'couple-construction'," and women constituted a threat both in their roles as sexual beings and as fellow workers and union comrades. Female activism thus indirectly challenged men to refashion their masculinity in the private sector, "as fathers, as lovers, as life companions."²³ Even non-feminist women were considered suspect in the public role, as seen in the Swedish Conservative Party that never fully recognized its female party organization even though the women supported the domestic ideal.²⁴ These explanations suggest that women's demands for political equality ultimately threatened male dominance in the private sphere.

The contention that working-class men consistently undermined women's struggles to rise politically and occupationally is nevertheless not without question marks.

²² Carlsson, *Kvinnosyn och kvinnopolitik*, 195-196, and Qvist et al., "Sweden," 277. Although forty-one percent of the LO membership were women in 1981, none served on the national executive board until 1981; however, in year 2000, Landsorganisationen chose the first woman as the head of the union congress since its formation in 1892. See *Aftonbladet*, 3 September 2000.

²³ Gunnel Karlsson, "Bokanmälan – Ylva Waldemarson: Kvinnor och klass – en paradoxal skapelseberättelse. LOs Kvinnoråd och makten att benämna 1898–1967," *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv* 6.3 (Fall 2000).

²⁴ Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, "Equal or different? That's not the question. Women's political strategies in historical perspective," in Drude von der Fehr, Anna G. Jónasdóttir, and Bente Rosenbeck ed., *Is there a Nordic Feminism? Nordic feminist thought on culture and society*, (London, UK: UCL Press Limited, 1998), 37-38.

After all, it was largely the efforts of the Social Democratic Party and the Liberals that eventually brought women the vote. The hiatus in the early twentieth century might be more a strategic position by the social democrats than a reflection of latent misogyny. Achieving universal male suffrage was a difficult step on its own, and at the time it might have seemed expedient to concentrate on the battle they were more likely to win.

A different study indicates that women in many cases seemingly accepted the gendered power division as a common sense family oriented strategy.²⁵ Despite this outward sign of complacency, the exclusion of women from labour historiography might be less a reflection on women's historic position in the labour movement than an indictment of a tendency to dismiss female-style activism as irrelevant. This argument suggests that women's past tendency to focus their work in arenas where they could operate without male infringements, such as in prohibitionist movements, charity organizations, and sewing circles were political choices on par with male political forums.²⁶ While these venues were not overtly political on par with party politics, it gave women a forum to discuss issues that stretched beyond that of the presumed purpose for the meeting. Moreover, in Sweden as in British Columbia, women's auxiliaries served an important economic function. Swedish sewing circles "crocheted and embroidered together money" for children's summer camps, and for the needy in Russia, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and Finland, not to mention to club coffers, which financed male associational activities.²⁷

Rather than suggesting a male conspiracy, however, Karin Nordberg suggests that in a "couple contract," women accepted a subordinate role that concealed their

²⁵ Nordberg, "De skötsamma fruarna i Holmsund," 4-22.

²⁶ Nordberg, "De skötsamma fruarna i Holmsund," 5.

²⁷ Nordberg, "De skötsamma fruarna i Holmsund," 15-17

importance to the male-led organizations. When interviewed, women never suggested that they were victims of organized male oppression. Rather, they were proud of their roles as service providers, and indifferent to suggestions that men and women should share all ranks equally.²⁸ Nordberg, however, believes the women's stance was an involuntary internalizing of a system that relegated them to the kitchen. The virtual exclusion from male associations caused women "to create their own public sphere, where they used their female knowledge as a base for their own political contributions."²⁹ This explanation has most resonance when studying Swedish women in British Columbia, who, whether by choice or necessity, played a more vital role in auxiliary circles than they did in organized politics or labour movements.

Church and social club records indicate that Swedish immigrant women in Vancouver had little influence over the public sphere in the Swedish-Canadian community. Overall, they followed a classical female pattern of resistance and accommodation. Perhaps because of the small number of female Swedish immigrants in B.C., they displayed none of the highly organized behaviour that was so apparent among activist women in the Social Democratic Party and in the union. Swedish women in British Columbia seem to have more in common with Karin Nordberg's module in that they played low-keyed public roles in Swedish-led churches and social clubs, but still managed to retain much control of their private spaces, both outside and within the family. Occupationally, Swedish women were relegated to service-related vocations, but many used their domestic skills to advantage, running businesses such as boarding houses or restaurants. Likewise, the very dearth of Swedish women in British Columbia made

²⁸ Nordberg, "De skötsamma fruarna i Holmsund," 7 and 12.

²⁹ Nordberg, "De skötsamma fruarna i Holmsund," 19.

them attractive marital subjects for Swedish-Canadian men to whom Swedish women came to symbolize the familiar security of the homeland.

There were too few Swedish women in British Columbia to have made an impact in the B.C. labour movement, but one can look at how Swedish immigrant women acted within other public spheres in British Columbia. If the frontier thesis is correct in its claim that women gain powers when living in a society where they are in short supply, the Swedish female tradition of fighting for equality should have strengthened women's position in social settings among Swedish immigrants in British Columbia. The remainder of this chapter looks at their position in the workforce and their involvement in social and political clubs in Vancouver, and tries to determine to what extent emigration to Canada affected their relationship to Swedish men. It will conclude with a discussion on women's position in the family and try to reconcile the private and the public sphere.

Swedish women were in short supply in their own national group in British Columbia, and they prove elusive in many standard demographic sources. Between 1911 and 1941, women made up between 18 percent and 28 percent of the total Swedish-born population in British Columbia.³⁰ Since Swedish men tended to work in the resource industries and Swedish women in the service sector, men were concentrated in rural areas while women were drawn to the urban environment. This chapter considers both individual accounts and census information, but, as noted in Chapter 1, it must be acknowledged that as historical subjects, women are notably more difficult to follow than

³⁰ The numbers of Swedish-born men and women in British Columbia: 1911 – Men = 5 836, Women = 1282; 1921 – Men 4 178, Women = 1 557; 1931 – Men = 7 041, Women = 2 292; 1941 – Men = 5578, Women = 2149. See Census of Canada, Vol. 1 Table XVII, Birthplace of the people by provinces, 1911; Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 52, Birthplace of the total population by sex, for provinces, 1921; Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 46, Birthplace of the population, by counties or census divisions, 1931; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 43, Birthplace of the population, by counties or census divisions, 1941.

are men. Based on a name and an approximate time of arrival, Swedish male immigrants can be found in Swedish emigration records and Canadian vital statistics, information that then can be confirmed and developed through obituaries in Swedish-Canadian newspapers. Women, however, are more difficult to unearth, since their individual identity tended to disappear upon marriage and documents commonly referred to them by a “Mrs” prefix that omitted given names.³¹ Moreover, considering the tendency of the Canadian Census to change its categorization from census to census, it is difficult to carry out long-term comparative analysis based on its reports. Nonetheless, one can note some demographic trends. We can tell that in 1911, twenty-four percent of Vancouver’s Swedish-born population was female, a percentage figure that still held true 1941.³² A later census shows the distribution according to rural and urban. In 1921, thirty-seven percent of Swedish-born women in B.C. lived in urban areas, a figure that fell to thirty percent in the 1931 Census (Table 7.1).³³ Thus, the gender distribution seemed more skewed in Vancouver, although overall it seemed to fluctuate in urban areas.³⁴

³¹ For example, I am able to deduce from Swedish emigration records and Vancouver Church records that Agnes Betty Kristina Larson worked as a domestic servant before leaving Sweden in July 1924 and was admitted as member to the Augustana Church in 1925. Since Agnes is not registered in the vital statistics for marriages in B.C. before 1927, the cut-off date for permissible searches in the Vital Statistics of B.C., her married name is unknown, making her nearly impossible to relocate in Swedish-Canadian organizations, B.C. Vital Statistics, and obituaries.

³² Among Vancouver’s Swedish-born population in 1911, 1 050 were men and 326 women; Vancouver’s Swedish-born population in 1941 showed 1 483 men and 761 women. See Census of Canada, Vol. 1 Table XV, Birthplace by districts, 1911; and Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 44, Population by birthplace and sex, for metropolitan areas, 1941.

³³ See Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 50, Numerical distribution of the immigrant population, rural and urban, by birthplace and sex, for provinces, 1921; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 25b, Birthplace of the immigrant population, by sex, rural and urban, Canada and provinces, 1931.

³⁴ As with Swedish men, the Canadian Census groupings obscure the extent Swedish women worked in specific occupations. Prior to 1931, Swedes were gathered under European in the occupational tables, and while it was somewhat easier to draw conclusions on Swedish vocations in B.C. in the 1931 Census, even here they were compiled with Danes, Norwegians, and Icelanders. Nonetheless, while the census lumps all Scandinavians in one group, separated only by gender, qualitative evidence suggest that Swedish women’s occupational experience did not differ significantly from that of other Scandinavian women in British Columbia.

Nonetheless, despite its imperfections, the Census helps understanding the occupational categories among Swedish women in B.C.

Table 7.1 The Swedish-born population by sex, rural and urban, British Columbia, 1921 and 1931.

| | 1921 | | | | 1931 | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Men | % | Women | % | Men | Percent | Women | Percent |
| Total | 4 178 | 73% | 1 557 | 27% | 7 041 | 75% | 2 292 | 25% |
| Rural | 3 202 | 76% | 991 | 24% | 4 512 | 79% | 1 183 | 21% |
| Urban | 976 | 63% | 566 | 37% | 2 529 | 70% | 1 109 | 30% |

Census of Canada, Vol. 2. Table 25b, Birthplace of the immigrant population, by sex, rural and urban, Canada and provinces, 1931; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2. Table 25b, Birthplace of the immigrant population, by sex, rural and urban, Canada and provinces, 1931.

Wage earning Swedish women were concentrated in service-oriented occupations in British Columbia.³⁵ According to the Census, 12,224 Scandinavian women lived in British Columbia in 1931, the majority originated from Sweden (5,674) and Norway (4,685).³⁶ Of those, 1 751 Scandinavian origin women were gainfully employed in British Columbia (Table 7.3). This means that more than 21.4 percent of the Scandinavian women were gainfully employed in 1931, compared to 20.3 percent of all women in British Columbia. While a slightly larger number of Scandinavian women worked for wages in B.C. than did women overall, the Scandinavian women therefore still seemed to be less likely to be employed than they would have been in Sweden, where women comprised one-third of the total workforce.³⁷ Nonetheless, the lack of

³⁵ According to the marriage registry of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Vancouver, Swedish women worked predominantly in domestic service. Of fifty-five Swedish-born women, there were forty domestic servants, housekeepers or cooks; two waitresses, six seamstresses or milliners; one teacher; two stenographers; two nurses; one cigar maker, and one hotel keeper. See Registry of Marriage, Augustana Lutheran Church, Vancouver, 1920-1926, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College, Illinois.

³⁶ The Census incorporates Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland into Scandinavia. If we look at Scandinavian born women, the figure is substantially lower. In all, 5063 Scandinavian *born* women lived in British Columbia in 1931, the majority born in Sweden (2 292) and Norway (2 088), but also 516 Danish, and 167 Icelandic women. See Census of Canada, 1931, Table 24. Birthplace of the population, by sex, Canada and provinces, 1911-1931.

³⁷ Lynn Karlsson and Ulla Wikander, "Om teknik, arbetsdelning och ideology som formare av kvinnors – och mäns – arbetsvillkor," *Historisk Tidskrift*, 1 (1987): 62-63.

women among Scandinavian immigrants created demands on services that helped women both to find waged work and to operate their own businesses, as long as it was connected to the domestic sphere. This is illustrated by the fact that Scandinavian origin women were under-represented in most occupations other than service, were they were greatly overrepresented (Table 7.3). In 1902, when Per Nilsson wrote from Preston, Washington, to his fiancée Märta Sundström in Sweden, he remarked upon how easy it was for women in North America to find work, and how much money they could earn: “laundry and ironing is fairly expensive here, [and] you could make a fairly good wage if you keep your health”³⁸ This letter was penned just south of the border, and the frontier society of Canada’s west coast suggests that vocational opportunities for women in British Columbia were similar during the first few decades of the twentieth century.³⁹

Table 7.2. Women and Scandinavian origin women, ages 15 and 69, and percentage thereof in B.C., 1931.

| | Numbers | Percent | Working | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| ALL WOMEN | 215,328 | 70% | 43,748 | 20.30% |
| SCAND WOMEN | 8178 | 67% | 1,751 | 21.40% |
| <i>Danish</i> | 956 | 67% | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Icelandic</i> | 323 | 75% | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Norwegian</i> | 3038 | 65% | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Swedish</i> | 3861 | 68% | N/A | N/A |

From Census of Canada, Vol 3, Table 16, “Racial origin classified by quinquennial age groups and sex, for provinces, 1931.

³⁸ Per Nilsson to Märta Sundström, Preston August 10 1902, and Preston September 28 1902, Letter collection, “Röising, Edna” 10:10:10B, 1901-1905. Held at the Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden [Hereon R.E. at SIE].

³⁹ In B.C., Chinese immigrants did much of the laundry work, but the demand for female workers was still high.

Table 7.3 Gainfully employed, all women and Scandinavian origin women in British Columbia, 1931.⁴⁰

| Occupations | All women | Percentage | Scand women | Percentage |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 43, 748 | 100% | 1 751 | *100% |
| Agriculture | 1,460 | 3.30% | 57 | 3% |
| Forestry, fishing and trapping | 179 | 0.40% | 9 | 0.50% |
| Mining, quarrying etc. | 84 | 0.2 | 8 | 0.45% |
| Manufacturing | 3,266 | 7.50% | 87 | 5% |
| <i>Vegetable products</i> | 705 | 1.60% | 22 | 1% |
| <i>Animal products</i> | 749 | 1.70% | 13 | 0.70% |
| <i>Textile products</i> | 495 | 1.10% | 17 | 0.90% |
| <i>Wood products; printing, publishing</i> | 813 | 1.80% | 26 | 1.50% |
| <i>Miscellaneous products</i> | 559 | 1.30% | 9 | 0.50% |
| Construction | 129 | 0.30% | 4 | 0.45% |
| Transportation and communication** | 2,539 | 5.80% | 55 | 3% |
| Trade*** | 7,506 | 17% | 168 | 9.50% |
| <i>Retail dealing</i> | 6,502 | 14.80% | 145 | 8% |
| <i>Wholesale dealing</i> | 1,004 | 2.30% | 23 | 1% |
| Finance, insurance | 1,837 | 4.20% | 24 | 1.50% |
| Service | 26,452 | 60.50% | 1,332 | 76% |
| <i>Professional service****</i> | 9,718 | 22.20% | 240 | 13.70% |
| <i>Public administration</i> | 1,112 | 2.50% | 23 | 1.30% |
| <i>Recreational service</i> | 332 | 0.75 | 4 | 0.45% |
| <i>Custom and repair</i> | 1,805 | 4.10% | 71 | 4% |
| <i>Business service</i> | 192 | 0.40% | 2 | 0.10% |
| <i>Personal service*****</i> | 13,293 | 30% | 992 | 56.60% |
| Unspecified | 241 | 0.5 | 7 | 0.40% |

*Note: Scandinavian women composed 4% of the total workforce.

** Number includes 40 telephone operators.

*** Number includes thirteen owners of retail operations, and eighty-nine sales women.

**** Number includes eighty-four nurses or nurses in training, and eighty-eight teachers.

***** Number includes ten hotel managers, and 104 boarding house keepers.

The high number of Scandinavian women in the workforce is consistent with Swedish women's homeland experiences. Between 1910 and 1950, women comprised one-third of the total Swedish workforce, mostly in agriculture, domestic labour and industrial work. After 1950 these configurations had changed, since women increasingly

⁴⁰ Census of Canada, Vol 7, Table 62, Gainfully occupied, 10 years of age and over, by industry group, racial origin, and sex, for the provinces, 1931.

abandoned agriculture and domestic work for offices, commerce and industry.⁴¹ Still, women's work in Sweden was mired in subordinate positions, consistently low paid, and highly segregated from male labour. Moreover, as in Canada, women struggled through a discriminatory period in the 1920s and 1930s, when employers often fired them upon marriage.⁴²

For many single Swedish women, work in domestic service was a springboard to independence in Canada. Although historians justifiably consider this occupation in a negative light considering inadequate regulations of wages and work hours, not to mention the vulnerability to sexual harassment, interviews with Swedish women paint it in a more positive light.⁴³ Karin Stamberg had mostly positive memories from her time as domestic servant and cook in Canada between 1927-1935. Her brightest moments were working for the Swedish immigrant and politician Rolf Wallgren-Bruhn, but she was equally happy keeping house for a Canadian lawyer and his family in Vancouver. In total, Stamberg worked for seven different families in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and according to her memoir, her constant moves were not due to abuse or poor wages, but from boredom with her position or a desire to travel to new areas. Karin

⁴¹ Women comprised 20 percent of the total workforce in the industry, in particular the textile industry, although the majority worked in agriculture or as servants and maids. Karlsson and Wikander, "Om teknik, arbetsdelning och ideologi," 62-63.

⁴² Karlsson and Wikander, "Om teknik, arbetsdelning och ideologi", 75-77. In many cases women were not fired before they were pregnant, and married women's work was protected through legislation in 1939. Moreover, the authors claim that married women's waged work was higher than what the statistics suggest, since many women eked out their income by doing seasonal or part time labour, or by occasionally hiring out as laundresses or domestic workers. Karlsson and Wikander, "Om teknik, arbetsdelning och ideologi", 62.

⁴³ It is of note that domestic service in Sweden was also considered undesirable, low-paid work with long hours and under difficult circumstances. While Swedish domestic servants were organized between 1904 and 1946, they never gained full union status and they never achieved reaching a contract with their employers. As in Canada, the isolation, the long work day, and, Kerstin Moberg argues, a lack of insight in unionism prevented their association from developing. Although Sweden had an estimated 140 000 maids, in its heyday the Domestic Servants Association never had more than 500 members. Moberg, *Från tjänstehjon till hembitråde*, 226.

eventually left domestic service for work in a textile factory, and finally returned to Sweden in 1935 when she feared the many unemployed men in Depression-torn Vancouver would start rioting.⁴⁴ Likewise, when “Margareta Quist” first arrived in Vancouver she worked as a cook for “big houses,” and she recalled that her Canadian families were very appreciative of her Swedish-style cooking. Margareta argued that Swedish women never had difficulty finding work, even during the Depression, since their services as maids or cooks were always in high demand.⁴⁵

Swedish women also used their skills to become financially independent. Nearly seven percent – 117 Scandinavian women – were self-employed in British Columbia. There are very few comprehensive studies done on female entrepreneurship in Canada, and none on women from ethnic minority groups. Melanie Buddle’s recent dissertation on businesswomen in British Columbia points out that even white Anglo-Saxon women were in minority among business people, non-white women or women from minority groups were even more rare.⁴⁶ The difficulty in finding Swedish businesswomen in British Columbia is therefore understandable, and the examples below do not pretend to generalize about female entrepreneurs in general, but merely illuminate some of the circumstances behind Swedish female self-employment.

⁴⁴ “Mina år i Canada,” unpublished memoir by Karin Stamberg, Svartsjö, Sweden, 1974. I am grateful to her nephew, Björn Amberg, for sharing his aunt’s memoir. For further information on Swedish domestic servants, see Eva St Jean, “Swedish Immigrant Women: ‘Never, Never Sorry — Always Glad.’” British Columbia Historical News 30.1 (Winter 1996-97): 30-33.

⁴⁵ For similar positive historical descriptions of Swedish-American women in domestic service, see Joy Lintelman, “‘America is the woman’s promised land’: Swedish Immigrant Women and American Domestic Service,” Journal of American Ethnic History (Spring 1989): 9-23, and Ulf Beijbom, “The Promised Land for Swedish Maids,” in Swedes in America: Intercultural and Interethnic Perspectives on Contemporary Research: New Perspectives, ed. Ulf Beijbom (The Swedish Emigrant Institute, Series 6, 1993): 110-125.

⁴⁶ Melanie Buddle, “The Business of Women: Gender, Family and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1901-1971,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Victoria, 2003), 28.

Studies on independent businesswomen of the nineteenth century suggest the 1880s Married Women's Property Acts helped female entrepreneurs by letting married women own property in their own name, and more importantly, allowing them to be legally responsible for debts. With creditors able to legally pursue women who failed to meet payments, financial institutions were also more likely to look favourably on women entrepreneurs who posed a low risk of failure.⁴⁷ Although the Acts specified married women, the "legislation also acted as a catalyst for increased activity in economic affairs for all women."⁴⁸ Thus the level of women's business activity increased, although their investments remained focused on the traditional sphere of female activity.⁴⁹

Women's ability to become self-employed seemed to have varied depending on geographical area. In a comparative study on female entrepreneurs in Victoria, British Columbia, and Hamilton, Ontario, Peter Baskerville notes distinct differences in types and intensity of investments. Despite higher real estate prices and cost of living, the percentage of female property owners in Victoria was significantly higher than in Hamilton, where women tended to invest in stocks and bonds. Thus, while Married Women's Property Acts were in place in both provinces, women in Victoria were more likely to take advantage of these new financial and legal options. The differences between the two cities might be connected to the existence of "frontier" society in British Columbia, where the economic structure focused on land investments. Moreover, since B.C.'s resource industry attracted more single men than women, the resulting imbalanced sex ratio granted women a certain economic power in marriage that aided female

⁴⁷ Peter Baskerville, "'She has already hinted at board': Enterprising Urban Women in British Columbia, 1863-96," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 26 (Nov. 1993): 211-215.

⁴⁸ Baskerville, "Women and Investment," 194-195.

⁴⁹ Baskerville, "'She has already hinted at board'," 219.

financial autonomy.⁵⁰ To a certain degree, these findings correspond with the history of Swedish businesswomen in Vancouver.

Swedish women in British Columbia expanded on a history of engaging in small entrepreneurial enterprises in their homeland. Although they were not considered fully legally independent before 1920 in Sweden, thus being barred from many trades, single and married women were able to own and operate certain small businesses, such as grocery stores, millineries or similar outlets. Widows were in a unique position since they were able to continue running their dead husbands' businesses, as long as they did not remarry. This was true even for trades that were normally closed for women. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the Swedish government actually used business licences as a way of preventing single or married but impoverished women to become a burden on society. Thus, for a woman to gain permission to run her own company, she needed to be a widow of a tradesman or at poverty's door. However, with improved social welfare and a growing conviction that women's place was in the home, women's entrepreneurial participation declined in the early 1900s, not to re-emerge until the latter part of the twentieth century.⁵¹

Swedish women in British Columbia also were attracted to the independence that self-employment offered. Nonetheless, the women deviated somewhat from the homeland tradition, since they were most likely to operate boarding houses in B.C., rather than small corner stores. Boarding houses were a rare phenomenon in Sweden, and, after the mid-nineteenth century, men mainly owned the closest alternatives, the

⁵⁰ Baskerville, "Women and Investment," 205-218.

⁵¹ Christina Bladh, "Kvinna med eget företag - från 1700-talets mitt till 1800-talets slut," in Mot halva makten – elva historiska essäer om kvinnors strategier och mäns motstånd, ed. Ingrid Hagman, (Stockholm, 1997), 127-142.

roadside inns and taverns. This had not always been so. Prior to 1813, women had dominated in the then very unprofitable tavern business, but when new regulations limited the numbers of licensed taverns making them more profitable, men became more interested. Still, as long as the government followed the policy of providing licenses to women who risked poverty, they were able to compete against male applicants. The death knell for female ownership came in 1850 when the government decided to auction tavern licenses to the highest bidder; since women lacked necessary capital, not one woman won permission to run a roadside inn or tavern.

In British Columbia, however, such licenses were not needed, and women took the offered opportunities. British Columbia's frontier environment with its male surplus made keeping boarders more common than in Central and Eastern Canada.⁵² Although interviews and comments in the New Swedish Press suggest that Swedish-run boarding houses were important support systems for Swedish men, these quarters were not likely limited to Swedes,⁵³ even if boarding-house families were likely to select guests whose cultural and religious background were "very familiar and compatible and not strange at all."⁵⁴

Keeping boarding houses was the single largest form of self-employment for Scandinavian women in British Columbia. It was one of the few, but very promising, enterprises that women could enter in the first half of the twentieth century. Peter Baskerville speculates that "potentially advantaged women" had a networking

⁵² 20.4 percent of families in B.C. and Manitoba kept boarders, while only 14.2 percent did so in Ontario and Quebec. Baskerville, "Familiar Strangers," 324 and 338.

⁵³ Margareta Quist [pseudo.], interview with author. See also articles on Frida Engblom and Edith Johnson in New Swedish Press, 3 July, 1958, and New Swedish Press, September 27 1961.

⁵⁴ Peter Baskerville, "Familiar Strangers: Urban Families with Boarders, Canada, 1901," Social Science History 25.3 (2001): 322-323; and John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the malleable household: An examination of boarding and lodging in American families," in Tamara Hareven, ed., Family and Kin in Urban Communities, 1700-1930, (New York: New Viewpoints, (1977), 164-86.

system that allowed them to assist women in similar circumstances.⁵⁵ This was certainly the case for “Margareta Quist” who like many other Swedish women, used her experiences in domestic work to open a private boarding house. This enabled her to become financially independent, first as a single woman, but also after her marriage to a Swedish logging contractor. “Margareta Quist” received help to equip a rooming house from Edith Johnson, a Swedish female friend. Edith, who owned a “larger hotel”, persuaded Margareta to quit her work as a maid and rent a house suitable for boarders. Since Margareta had no means of financing the necessary capital outlays, Johnson forwarded bedding and furniture on a generous long-term payment plan.⁵⁶

As Margaret Quist’s experience indicates, self-employment for Swedish women was not restricted to widowed or single women. Melanie Buddle discovered that while the common perception of a businesswoman is of a single person, female entrepreneurs were more likely to be older and married or widowed than not, and operating businesses that were closely connected to traditional female spheres of employment.⁵⁷ For many families, women’s work as boarding-house keeper helped secure funds for a future self-owned home, or pay mortgages on an already purchased home.⁵⁸ After Margareta’s marriage she ran the boarding house for four more years while her husband worked his way up from a hired logger to a small-scale but successful logging contractor in Sointula. Continuing her waged work as domestic servant, “Gerda Jansson” also ran a rooming house while her husband

⁵⁵ Baskerville, “Women and Investment,” 216.

⁵⁶ Margareta Quist [pseudo.], interview with author. According to the Swedish Press, Edith Johnson was well known for her generosity toward fellow countrymen and women. New Swedish Press, 3 July, 1958.

⁵⁷ Buddle, “The Business of Women,” 1 and 32.

⁵⁸ Baskerville, “Familiar Strangers,” 327-328.

“Ulf” worked in a sawmill. Gerda and Ulf bought a much bigger house than a small working-class family of three would normally purchase for their own needs, and rented out five or six rooms with board during the Depression years. In retrospect, Gerda’s son sees his mother’s initiative to keep boarders as a family strategy that enabled investments in real estate, which eventually helped the family to prosper.⁵⁹

Likewise, Edith Johnson continued to own and manage hotels and rooming houses after her marriage. According to the Swedish Press, she was in the hotel business for forty of her forty-eight years in British Columbia. Edith was seventeen years old when she arrived in B.C. in 1910, most likely joining her older sister, Anna, in Kamloops. Edith worked as a hotelkeeper when she married in 1924, and owned and operated the Hornby Hotel at the time of her death in 1958.⁶⁰ Edith thus continued to own and manage hotels after marriage and the birth of her only child. The selection is small, but the three women who kept their boarding houses or hotels after their marriages have in common the fact that they had small families. Ironically, becoming self-employed in the domestic sphere may have hinged on not having a significant private domestic responsibility.

Other women became boarding-house keepers in order to support children when widowed. Frida Louisa Engblom left Sweden as a married woman in 1898 together with three daughters, ages five, three, and one. According to emigration records, Frida, age 28, and her husband Nils Petter, age 54, had farmed near the eastern coast of Ångermanland, a province in central Sweden. Nils had emigrated more than one year prior to Frida’s departure, stating Lethbridge, Alberta, as a destination goal. There was a twenty-six year

⁵⁹ Sven Jansson [pseudo.], interview with author.

⁶⁰ B.C. Vital Statistics, Marriage, B13747, Registration number 1924-09-271344, and New Swedish Press, July 10 1958.

difference in ages between Frida and Nils, but Frida did not remarry after Nils' death. Instead, she arrived in British Columbia, first settling in Golden, where she ran a hotel, before moving to Vancouver in 1909. She likely had some savings, perhaps from selling a family farm after the husband's death, since she quickly established herself in the boarding house and café business.

Although women operated their own establishments, they tended to disappear in public records. After arriving in Vancouver in 1909, Frida Engblom became the proprietor of a rooming house on 261 Pender. She expanded the business in 1912, when she moved to the Engblom Café and boarding house at 767 Harris Street, advertising "newly furnished rooms and Swedish service."⁶¹ In 1916, Engblom again developed her business, buying a boarding house on East Georgia Street, which she ran single-handedly until 1924, when she hired a caretaker.⁶² In fact, she was so prominent in the community that her section of East Georgia became known as "Engblom's block." Despite her long established and well-known public activity, her death certificate registers her occupation as "At home" even though the form asks for pre-retirement employment. It is true that Engblom worked in her home, but her home had also been the place of a successful business venture, a fact that her vital statistics data ignored.⁶³ Melanie Buddle contends that this was a common fate for female entrepreneurs who worked in their homes, although they were "arguably just as business-like as men whose businesses were separated from their homes."⁶⁴ Engblom had made a comfortable living by providing

⁶¹ *Svenska Vancouver Posten*, 1913 20 May.

⁶² *New Swedish Press*, September 27 1961, and B.C. Directory, 1909 – 1945. The B.C. Directory records three different caretakers for Freda Engblom's property between 1925 and 1945: E Johnsson, Mrs Frederika Johnson, and Paul Nunuk.

⁶³ B.C. Vital Statistics, Deaths, B13253, 1961-09-010320.

⁶⁴ Buddle, "The Business of Women," 35.

housing and meals to many single men in Vancouver, and it is unlikely that having a manager for the boarding house prevented her from remaining in administrative control of her investment after her retirement. She, like many other women, was able to profit on the remnants of an ideology that placed women in the domestic sphere, and while the overabundance of single men facilitated such endeavour, it does not change the fact that even in B.C.'s "frontier environment," women were barred from most other types of employment.

Thus, to be accepted in public enterprise women needed to tie their businesses to the private sphere. It is equally clear that Swedish men in British Columbia mistrusted women's initial attempts to enter the public political sphere. The Swedish-Canadian newspaper, Svenska Vancouver Posten, published in Vancouver between 1910 and 1914, rejected politically active women. Ethnic newspapers are the most public voices for immigrant communities, and the pages of Svenska Vancouver Posten do not indicate that the shortage of Swedish women encouraged political gender equality. Rather, the Vancouver Posten steadfastly relegated women to the domestic and silent sphere. Surprisingly, the editor was Nita Sundborg, daughter of Oscar L. Sundborg, the newspaper's founder, indicating either that even influential women subscribed to the general notion of separate spheres, or that the paper feared that it would lose readers if it supported the suffragettes. Nita Sundborg made clear that women should only enter the public sphere under very special circumstances. As for suffrage, she asked:

Has every ounce of femininity left these women? ... So easily are they captivated by semblance and so shallow are their viewpoints that they are not able to comprehend that woman is not by any means [men's] equal. ... It is a bold proposal to, as the women's movement does, suggest that all our past [history] is a lie, and for sure they will not succeed. To man alone is given to guard over the state. Why should he not then control it? All his disposition and

temperament speak for it, while woman has no talent that way. Her world is the home, where her special nature can come to full credit, where she has a mission, which no man can fulfill. And as said, her purpose there is as high as the man's, when he controls the state.⁶⁵

The paper also published more favourable accounts of public women, but made it clear that they had to follow scripts that stressed the qualities of defencelessness and frailty that supposedly characterized a true woman. In an article that totally ignores the contents of a suffragette's speech, the journalist focuses on the physical aspects of the speaker:

Mrs. Wiksell wore a simple satin dress that softly covered her body and totally seemed to reflect her soft nature.

Others might have had more success, but those who listened carefully ... were deeply moved by this slender, weak woman. She speaks slowly, stumblingly ... and must hang on to the podium so not to sink [to the floor] overcome by emotion.

But one follows with anticipation her every word ... not so much for the outer meaning of her words as to an inner music. ... She has raised two sons and therefore has not neglected any of her womanly duties.

... While she seems to speak of high political questions, she actually only speaks of the only, of woman's high calling, of the wonder of motherhood.⁶⁶

It is a wonder that this prostrate woman ever found the strength to raise two rambunctious boys, but the exaggerated female stereotypical attributes of weakness and highly charged emotions might have been necessary in order to excuse her public role. It is not surprising, therefore, that we learn much about the speaker's clothing and posture, and little of her political message; indeed, the author confessed not even to have listened.

While the Vancouver Posten's stand on feminism was the most extreme in the Swedish community, surviving records of club and church activities in the Lower Mainland in the early part of the twentieth century suggest that women played a

⁶⁵ Svenska Vancouver Posten, 20 May 1913.

⁶⁶ SVP, 12 August 1913.

subordinate, although significant, role in organized activities. Swedes in Vancouver led a rich organizational life, and all groups were open to some degree of participation by both women and men.⁶⁷ The Swedish Baptist Church in Matsqui and the Swedish Lutheran Church in Vancouver originated in the first decade in the 1900s. The Swedish Vancouver chapter of the International Order of the Good Templar, *Linnéa* was another early Swedish-Canadian organizations in Vancouver. *Lekstugan* – the playhouse –dedicated to Swedish folkdances, music and culture, included men and women in its roster, as did the Scandinavian Workers Club (*Skandinaviska Arbetarklubben*) – SAK. The Swedish fraternal order of SVEA was a mutual unemployment and sick benefit organization that served Swedish men from 1909. While it did not allow female members, women helped organize social events, and over several decades some SVEA members repeatedly requested that women be allowed to enter, or that SVEA help women create a similar sister organization. As the following will show, although the treatment of women differed slightly between organizations, they played a secondary role in the administration of all political, religious, and social assemblies.

Records from two Swedish churches, the Augustana Lutheran Church in Vancouver, and the Baptist Church in Matsqui survive. The First Baptist Church of Matsqui, B.C., was organized in 1910 with 18 members from the Swedish Baptist Church in Bellingham, Washington.⁶⁸ Elisabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley

⁶⁷ Some Swedish historians suggest that Swedes in Canada even “over organized” to the point of fragmenting the Swedish immigrant group as a whole. Lars Ljungmark and Sune Åkerman, “The Unknown Emigration — Swedes in Canada 1870-1970,” *Arkiv i Norrland* 16 (1998): 110.

⁶⁸ <http://www.bgc.ca/aboutus/Brief%20History.html> April 24, 2003. The Augustana Church in Vancouver was founded in 1903, although much of the original records were destroyed in a fire 1912. The original congregation of the Matsqui Baptist Church consisted of eighteen members, who met weekly for Sunday worship. See Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 26 March 1910. The flock grew steadily over the next few years, despite a couple of exclusions and legitimate moves, and the 1912 roster shows 40 members, whereof 23 were women, many members of larger families. For example, the Svärd family had seven

believe that both women and men had difficulties overcoming the idea that women were both weaker and more nurturing than were men.⁶⁹ Lynne Marks, however, proposes that evangelical churches, in particular the Baptist, were more inclined to gender equality than were non-evangelical congregations.⁷⁰ This, however, is hardly noticeable in the Matsqui Baptist Church, except perhaps that it, probably due to its low membership rate, used a female secretary several years earlier than the Augustana Lutheran Church.⁷¹ In both churches, however, the Trustee and Deacon committees were all male, while women were active on a lower level, such as in temporary committees that dealt with membership issues or in sewing clubs and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Women's fundraising ability gave them some extra power in the larger Lutheran Church, where they at times resisted being dominated by male church leaders.⁷² Swedish women had a tradition of raising money for causes they deemed worthy. Louise Waldén suggests that sewing clubs in Sweden were an example of hidden female public and political activity. Sewing clubs allowed women to meet and discuss political and societal issues, forming insights that they later used to influence their husbands. They also

members; Nordin, five; Pognant, five; and the founding Flodin family had four adult members. The number of members in the early years of the Augustana Church is unclear, but in 1930 it had 200 members. See Augustana General meeting Minutes, 3 March 1930.

⁶⁹ Elisabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, "Introduction. Putting Together the Puzzle of Canadian Women's Christian Work", in *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, ed. Elisabeth Gillian Muir & Marilyn Färdig Whiteley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 8.

⁷⁰ Lynne Marks, "Railing, Tattling, and General Rumour: Gossip, Gender, and Church Regulation in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, 81 (September 2000): 386. Tina Block's research suggests that despite competing ideas of what constitutes "proper" male and female behaviour, gender inequality within Church groups remained strong into the 1960. Tina Block, "'Boy Meets Girl': Constructing Sexuality in Two Victoria Churches, 1945-1960," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 10 (1999):

⁷¹ See Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 1 January 1912. It was not until much later, in 1940, that we see evidence that male and female members shared domestic tasks, such as weekly cleaning of the church.

⁷² The minutes of the Matsqui Baptist Church reveals very little of women's activity, except that it frequently express the Church's gratitude over reports from the sewing club, *Myran*, (trans., the Ant). It does state that the sewing club collected \$215.15 in Jan 1912, and the profit was used for missionary purpose rather than for enhancing of the Church Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 1 January 1912, and Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 31 May 1918.

transferred unpaid labour to societal service, collecting money for road surfacing, street lighting, collective laundries, even a lighthouse on the southern tip of Sweden.⁷³ Carina Rönnqvist notes that difficulty in establishing Lutheran Augustana congregations among the Swedish farming communities in Alberta arose as much from the farmers' shaky economy as it did from lack of numbers or disinterest. Thus, she argues, it was women's fundraising that founded the Swedish missions in Alberta.⁷⁴ This pattern is also evident among Swedish women in British Columbia. The income from the Ladies Auxiliary of the Vancouver Augustana Church, for example, often rivalled or exceeded other Church sources of income.⁷⁵ The Trustees expected the Ladies Auxiliary to organize fundraising events to cover routine costs, such as small repairs, and to prepare refreshments for church socials.⁷⁶ For the most part, the women seemed quite content to execute suggestions from the male leaders, but they were also non-apologetic about turning down requests, should they see fit. When the Women's Auxiliary was asked to prepare a dinner for the deacons in October 1932, it refused with the curt explanation that it already had to prepare for too many events.⁷⁷ Other times male leaders seemed to tiptoe around requesting help, expressing their wishes in rather gingerly terms.⁷⁸ Thus, the skewed

⁷³ Louise Waldén, "Vad konstituerar maktlöshet? - läsövning i textilens text, in Ingrid Hagman, ed *Mot halva makten. Elva historiska essäer om kvinnors strategier och mäns motstånd*, (Stockholm, 1997), 182-183.

⁷⁴ Carina Rönnqvist: "Svea folk i Babels land. Svensk identitet i Kanada under 1900-talets första hälft," [*Svea People in the Land of Babel. Swedish Identity in Canada during the First Half of the 20th Century*]. Ph.D. dissertation, Umeå, forthcoming.

⁷⁵ According to the financial report for July 1913, the Ladies Auxiliary earned a total of 68.05 dollars when the church collect was 78.40, and membership due 31.35 dollars. Later that year, the women collected 93.10 dollars, which was 60 per cent of the total monthly Church income of \$153.45. Augustana Church General Meeting Minutes, 3 December 1913.

⁷⁶ See for example, Trustee Minutes, 25 August, 1924. Likewise, in 1926 the Trustees asked how much money the Ladies Auxiliary had on hand, and requested that these moneys be turned over to pay for running bills. The minutes do not reveal how the women responded. Trustee Minutes, 1 November, 1926.

⁷⁷ Deacon Minutes, 31 October 1932.

⁷⁸ At one time the trustee meetings asked two male committee members to "try to work with the women's auxiliary" in organizing a bazaar. Trustee Minutes, 12 September, 1927.

demographics did not give Swedish women a stronger position in Church groups in comparison to women in mainstream Canadian churches, but while they certainly cooperated with male church leaders, neither did Swedish women shy away from establishing boundaries within where they were willing to work.⁷⁹

Lynne Marks notes that the blurring of border between the public and the private sphere in nineteenth century churches allowed evangelical congregations to use gossip to discipline and keep members in the fold.⁸⁰ This pattern survived in the Swedish Matsqui Baptist Church long into the twentieth century. But even when women accepted a subordinate public role, they were not always submissive when it concerned their private spaces and beliefs. The Swedish Baptist Church at times struggled in vain to keep women on the straight and narrow. For instance, Mr and Mrs “Karlsson” were told to visit Mrs “Molin” to discuss her position to God and the congregation.⁸¹ Although the trustees decided that Mrs Molin could remain in the congregation until the next general meeting, Mrs. Molin repeatedly asked to be struck from the membership roster, and even went to the length of writing a “vilifying letter about the congregation.” Still, the Pastor once more sent a committee to her house to attempt to sway her, and she was only excluded when it too failed to change her mind.⁸² Non-attendance caused “Mrs Persson’s” exclusion in 1925, together with “Maria Salin”, who allegedly had become besieged with “worldly love in such a way that she no longer had any interest in the

⁷⁹ For a comparison with women in mainstream Canadian churches, see Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) and Elisabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, eds., Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada, (University of Toronto Press 1995).

⁸⁰ Marks, “Railing, Tattling, and General Rumour,” 388.

⁸¹ The names have been changed out of sensitivity to surviving relatives.

⁸² Matsqui Baptist Church, 28 January 1921.

congregation.”⁸³ Likewise, “Hilda Olsson” was expelled for having moved and not kept in touch.⁸⁴ “Miss Anna Pettersson” was excluded in 1914 after having embraced “false beliefs,” and in 1923 Pastor Sundstrom visited “Inga Pettersson” who claimed to have received a greater light and insight in God’s word than Baptism afforded, and therefore wished to be separated from the Church.⁸⁵ The minutes suggest that these women were unapologetic about their “transgressions,” and largely ignored the trustees’ attempt to draw them back to the fold.⁸⁶

Most disciplinary actions were results of religious disagreements, but some were caused by sexual indiscretions or questionable behaviour.⁸⁷ In 1912, the Baptist church leaders worried over “Miss Anna Gustafsson” and “Mr Jakobsson’s” relationship, and assigned a committee to “visit her to explain the danger she was in.”⁸⁸ Miss Gustafsson was not easily cowed; even when prodded by senior church brothers, she simply refused to listen to the two-man committee that came visiting. Women were also involved in internal disputes. In 1914, Brother “Pettersson” accused Brother “Eriksson” of having acted wrongly against “Mrs Pettersson”, wherewith Eriksson was instructed to make peace with his sister congregationalist.⁸⁹ Similarly, in 1914 Miss “Jakobsson” was

⁸³ Matsqui Baptist Church, 4 January 1925.

⁸⁴ Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 1 January 1913.

⁸⁵ Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 27 April 1923.

⁸⁶ The records indicate that the Baptist Church expelled ten women and five men in total. Mostly the men’s expulsion was not commented about, but one was struck for religious “laxity,” and the other for being “unsuited” for the congregation. Church Member Records, Matsqui Baptist Church, 1910 – 1939.

⁸⁷ Women were also excluded from *Linnéa*, the Swedish Vancouver chapter of the temperance lodge, the International Order of the Good Templars, but it is likely that the reason was non-payment of membership fees. In August 1914, *Linnéa* excluded twenty-one men and seven women for undisclosed reasons. See Minutes, 1 August 1914, Lodge Linnea No. 76 fonds, Independent Order of Good Templars, Special Collections, University of British Columbia.

⁸⁸ Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 30 January 1912 and 25 February 1912.

⁸⁹ The disagreement was serious enough that Eriksson requested leaving the congregation, which was accepted in September the same year. Matsqui Baptist Church, Minutes, 26 January 1914.

excluded for irreconcilable behaviour against unnamed persons of the congregation.⁹⁰

Thus, the power relation within Swedish-Canadian churches did not favour women any more than it did in mainstream Canadian churches; however, women were unapologetic about controlling their private lives, whether this concerned religious freedom or social behaviour.

Swedish women were also involved in a number of secular clubs and associations, ranging from social clubs to labour organisations. Although the amount of their influence in these Swedish-Canadian groups varied, none of the clubs granted them equal status to male members. The cultural society, *Lekstugan* (the Playhouse) was founded in 1917 “to promote interest for Swedish folkdances, dance games, Swedish song, music and theatre, and also home crafts.”⁹¹ Forty-four members attended the first meeting, but the minutes did not record participants’ gender or names. A 1932 membership roster listed thirty-three women and thirty-five men, which suggests that the gender distribution was fairly even.⁹² Considering that the social purpose of the club and the focus on family activities reflected a domestic sphere ideology, one might assume that women played a significant role. The minutes make clear, however, that women were in charge of refreshments, but played a small part on the executive level. Occasionally, women were parts of larger finance committees, but men consistently held all individual positions, such as chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. When it came to elect a committee for organizing festivities in 1929, however, all the “sisters of the association” were elected.⁹³

⁹⁰ Membership records, Matsqui Baptist Church.

⁹¹ *Lekstugan*, Regulations.

⁹² *Lekstugan*, Membership register, 1932-62.

⁹³ *Lekstugan*, Minutes, 8 October 1929.

As in the church congregations, women were not party to major decision making, but their labour and initiatives raised valuable funds for the club. Women contributed by putting together “baskets” for special auctions that at times raised close to two-hundred dollars; those who brought along a food basket to special functions got in free of charge.⁹⁴ In February 1922, Mrs C. Granholm suggested starting a women’s sewing club, with the proceeds going to the club. The proposal was met with amused consent, and when the next month Mrs Granholm gave a “fully serious” report on the activities, the Lekstugan set aside \$15.00 for material. Later that year the sewing club reported an income of \$80.00 from the Christmas Bazaar.⁹⁵ Since the club’s main source of revenue, the monthly public dances, only rendered a profit of \$6.85, the sewing club must be considered a healthy addition that deserved greater respect.⁹⁶

Considering the economic benefits of women’s work, men’s patronizing attitudes were misguided, to say the least, but they rarely swung over to anything more serious than banter. Thus, when a committee led by a Nels Dahlgren suggested a rather provoking question for general discussion, the club members seemed to have reacted with some embarrassment.⁹⁷ The question “are men superior to women [?]” engaged a “brief discussion,” before the club postponed a decision to the next meeting; it never again reappeared in the minutes. Such explicit challenges to women were rare in most Swedish-Canadian clubs.

⁹⁴ Lekstugan, Minutes, 4 October 1923.

⁹⁵ Lekstugan, Minutes, 6 February 1922, 6 March 1922, and 9 January 1923.

⁹⁶ Interestingly, the income from the sewing club is not listed separately in the annual financial report. See for instance, Minutes 26 February 1923.

⁹⁷ Lekstugan, Minutes, March 3, 1926. The question was posed in English, while the notes were written in Swedish.

The one exception was the male friendship society, SVEA, where, perhaps not coincidentally, the same Nels Dahlgren was chairman in 1927.⁹⁸ Ironically, the fraternal group SVEA took its name from the maternal patriotic symbol for Sweden, Mother Svea. Founded in 1908 by the editor of Svenska Vancouver Posten, Oscar L. Sundborg, SVEA had a promising first year with ninety members and approximately \$600.00 in the till.⁹⁹ The group had a typical attendance of from twenty-four to fifty persons at meetings. The association served as a benefit agency for members in good standing, providing sickness and burial benefits, and even occasionally extending aid to widows of SVEA members.¹⁰⁰

While SVEA did not allow women to join, it encouraged female assistance during social get-togethers and fundraising events. Not surprisingly, women were welcome to make coffee and bake cookies for meetings,¹⁰¹ and they also contributed to fundraisers. In 1911, SVEA sponsored an event honouring the coronation of King George V. The “feast” showed a profit of \$75.75 due to the “energetic work” of some of the “Ladies,” in particular Mrs Anderson and Mrs Janson, in the sales of commemorative pins.¹⁰² Later that year, the club rewarded Mrs O. Nelson with a gift in recognition of “the work she always gave to the association.”¹⁰³ Thus, while women were not accepted as paying members who could collect benefits on their own rights, the male leadership did not refuse their labour and fundraising abilities.

⁹⁸ SVEA, Minutes, 6 December 1927.

⁹⁹ Svenska Vancouver Posten, 10 February 1910. In 1914, Nita Sundborg was the editor, and she married Carl Casparson in 1915.

¹⁰⁰ Friendship societies were common in Canada. They originated in Great Britain as a means to protect under-insured workers. See Lynne Bowen, “Friendly Societies in Nanaimo: The British Tradition of Self-Help in a Canadian Coal-Mining Community,” BC Studies 118 (Summer 1998): 67-92.

¹⁰¹ SVEA, Minutes, 6 December 1912.

¹⁰² SVEA, Minutes, 7 July 1911.

¹⁰³ SVEA, Minutes, 4 August 1911. Mrs O Anderson and Mrs Ax Jonson Osterberg handed over \$51.50 as a result of the “successful basket evening at Orange Hall 17 November, 1911. SVEA, Minutes, 1 December, 1911.

Occasionally widows of members in good standing benefited financially from their husband's membership beyond the entitled sickness insurance or burial cost. When Eric Ulinder died in September 1910, SVEA collected \$139.00 and some children's shoes, but since the members could not, for undisclosed reasons, resolve whether or not to hand over the money to the widow, they postponed the decision.¹⁰⁴ When Mrs. Johnson became a widow with three underage children in 1912, SVEA extended \$20.00, and formed a committee to study if the family was facing destitution.¹⁰⁵ The club was even more generous when couples had played active roles in the club. Mr and Mrs Swan Sundell had both spent time and energy organizing club get-togethers, and when Swan died in 1923, SVEA held a basket event that netted \$189.90. The club gave Mrs Sundell \$46.90 and \$150.00 to the children.¹⁰⁶ It also paid for the funeral (\$70.00) as according to regulation, and the widow received an additional \$75.00.¹⁰⁷ On a darker note, when Ed Forsberg died after five years of solid membership, his wife was told that she would receive no help with funeral services since Ed had fallen behind with membership payments.¹⁰⁸ Thus, women were involved in fundraising and entertainments, such as special dances, but the degree of financial assistance offered to widows depended on the status of the deceased husband and somewhat on the perceived worthiness of the widow.

Some male SVEA members contested the male exclusive policy both on social and economic grounds. A significant minority tried unsuccessfully over a period of eleven years to convince their brothers to accept female members. The question first

¹⁰⁴ SVEA, Minutes, 6 October 1910.

¹⁰⁵ SVEA, Minutes, 3 February 1913. SVEA was not alone in sympathising with the stricken family. According to Svenska Vancouver Posten, the Province organized a fundraising that collected \$500.00 to help Mrs Johanson to return to Sweden with her children as soon as she regained her strength. Svenska Vancouver Posten, 26 August 1913.

¹⁰⁶ SVEA, Minutes, 12 October 1923.

¹⁰⁷ SVEA, Minutes, 9 November, 1923.

¹⁰⁸ Ed Forsberg had been member since 1930. SVEA, Minutes, 8 November and 13 December 1935.

arose in 1910, only three months into the club's existence. An unnamed member suggested that SVEA help women form their own aid association, "suited to their needs." The question aroused a "lively discussion" where several speakers argued that such an association was needed and might even become "powerful." The SVEA members could not, however, reach a decision.¹⁰⁹ The question resurfaced twice in January 1912, but each time it was deferred to a time when more members could attend. For undisclosed reasons, the members briefly dropped the motion in February, but soon revived it with a modification that women must not be SVEA members, but that SVEA would help them create a separate club.¹¹⁰ This suggestion, too, came to nought, but a couple of years' later Edward Lund raised the issue yet again. This time, seventy-five members – twice the usual turnout – attended the meeting. According to the earlier pattern, after "a period of lively discussion, the motion was turned down."¹¹¹ The question was dormant again until August 1918 when J. Carlson wondered "how it would be if women would be allowed in the association." As before, it "was discussed in a lively manner," with several brothers favouring the suggestion, "but the motion was voted down."¹¹² In October the same year, V. Peterson and W. Wilson insisted that it would be advantageous to have women in the society, but again the question was postponed for several meetings.¹¹³

Without specifying why, some members voiced a concern that female members "would be too expensive" for the club. Finally, a committee was put in place to "try to determine from associations that allow lady members how this works out from all different viewpoints," a mandate which suggests that more than economics were at

¹⁰⁹ SVEA, *Minutes*, 4 March 1910.

¹¹⁰ O.G. Anderson, J. Swanson, and O. Blomkvist were elected to research the matter. 2 February 1912.

¹¹¹ SVEA, *Minutes*, 19 January 1914. [An Edward Lund married a Tekla Olson in 1908.]

¹¹² SVEA, *Minutes*, 12 August 1918.

¹¹³ SVEA, *Minutes*, 14 October 1918.

play.¹¹⁴ In May, the committee admitted defeat, since it had not been able to get any answers from other societies regarding “the so called lady question.”¹¹⁵ In August 1921, H. J. Diffner broached the subject for the last time, and was told that SVEA had tried to create a women’s association, but that since interest was weak, it considered the question to have been sufficiently discussed in the past.¹¹⁶ Thus, some male members wished to include women, and it is likely that the motivating force was a mixture of social concern, a desire to create occasions to mingle with Swedish women, and a genuine wish to help female Swedish workers in British Columbia.

Despite such evident reluctance to admit women, surprisingly and unexplained by the minutes, SVEA did register one woman in the membership log. Cecilia Wahlin emigrated from Sweden in 1906, and was entered as the club’s forty-sixth member.¹¹⁷ According to a Swedish emigration database, Wahlin, a bookkeeper’s daughter, left Sweden at age nineteen, destination “North America.”¹¹⁸ It is unclear exactly when she registered as a SVEA member, but she probably joined in 1910.¹¹⁹ Thus, she entered her name in the registry at the approximate time when some of the men started to request the acceptance of female memberships, which hardly can be a coincidence. She stated her occupation to be domestic servant (*piga*), and unlike male members who never noted marital status, Cecilia wrote that she was single. Wahlin’s civil status changed in 1914, however, when she married fellow SVEA member Jonas Granberg, a labourer who had

¹¹⁴ Committee members were V Peterson, Matson, and Clarence Johnson. SVEA, Minutes, 10 February 1919.

¹¹⁵ SVEA, Minutes, 12 May 1919.

¹¹⁶ SVEA, Minutes, August 1921.

¹¹⁷ SVEA, Membership registry.

¹¹⁸ Emigration registry, EMI-Bas, Swedish Institute of Emigration, Växjö, Sweden.

¹¹⁹ The minutes show that the men who signed up immediately before and after Cecilia Wahlin enrolled between 1909 and 1911. The membership log does not state the date of entry, but seems to have been kept in order of enrolment. Most of the time the minutes noted the date and name of new members, while at times the minutes merely noted how many were sworn in during the meeting.

traded Sweden for British Columbia in 1905. Why Cecilia Wahlin was permitted to sign the membership registry in the first place, and why her name was never mentioned in the minutes remains a mystery, but it is likely that this young domestic servant sparked the first discussion on female membership among SVEA's male members.

Thus, women were largely submerged in fundraising and domestic duties in most Swedish-Canadian churches and social associations. The one exception was the Scandinavian Workers Club (*Skandinaviska arbetarklubben* - SAC), where Swedish women frequently made their voices heard during meetings, even if they were not elected to leading positions. Although the club name suggests a broader Scandinavian membership, the vast majority of members were Swedish immigrants, and the minutes were mostly recorded in Swedish until Helen Seaholm, the Anglo-Canadian wife of Swedish immigrant Sven Seaholm shouldered the secretarial duties in January 1940.¹²⁰ SAC was organized in 1932 and disbanded in 1963. It frequently expressed difficulty in attracting members of either sex, which might partly explain women's relatively strong role in the club. While surviving club records lack a complete membership register, a partial membership list and notations of new members in the minutes provide names of eighty-nine men and forty-two women, which suggests that women were over-represented in the SAC as a whole. Unlike SVEA, SAC encouraged female participation. In 1939, it passed a resolution allowing married women to become members without paying a fee, and in 1942 the membership fee was dropped for all women.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Apart from English, the minutes were once written in Norwegian. See Minutes, Scandinavian Workers Club, 13 August 1939. Helen Seaholm kept minutes off and on from 7 January 1940 to 5 October 1941 when she resigned as secretary. After 1941 she would only keep minutes occasionally, likely because the regular secretary was unable to attend.

¹²¹ SAK, 26 November 1939.

Nevertheless, as in other Swedish- or Scandinavian-Canadian clubs, women rarely made it to the board, but played secondary roles as supporting members or at best secretary.

Women clearly affected the structure of the club, even when not Swedish born. The evening that Helen Seaholm became a member it was suggested to hold the meetings in the English language. The question was tabled, but after Helen was elected Secretary the next month, all records were kept in English.¹²² Helen brought a fresh, if somewhat irreverent tone to the minutes. In 1941, she noted after the opening remarks by the president, Sven's brother Seth (sometimes called Sid) Seaholm, that when he "finally got through with his speach [sic] the applause were thunderous. Whether this was over his speach, [sic] or if it where because they all were so happy that he finally got finished . . . I don't know." Of her own contribution at the same meeting she wrote, "Our Secretary is a woman of few words, and so was her report."¹²³ A month later, her humorous description of Sid Seaholm's new chairman's club had sexual overtones. Seaholm's old gavel, she noted, was "short and stubby and not much good for anything," while the new one had "a long handle, and a solid head [making it] really something to hang on to. The Chairman now reminds us of a big strong cave man." At the same meeting Mrs Hallgren responded to Bert Carlsson's request for help with, "why, it will be a pleasure to handle a part of Bert's task."¹²⁴ Helen Seaholm was English speaking and Canadian born, but her easy tone and jocular descriptions indicate that female SAC members felt secure and comfortable at meetings.¹²⁵

¹²² SAK 17 December 1939 and 7 January 1940.

¹²³ SAK, Minutes, 5 January 1941.

¹²⁴ SAK, Minutes, 16 February 1941.

¹²⁵ Helen Seaholm was not alone in adding humour to the meetings. When Mrs Sundbeck read a poem caricaturizing the club members it provided "a good laugh for everyone." SAK, Minutes, 19 April 1942.

Predictably, women dominated in all kitchen duties, but SAC men were more likely to don aprons than were men in other Swedish-Canadian groups. Anna Johnson might have been elected to make sure that club members “could wet their dry throats with a cup of coffee after the meetings,” but Sven Seaholm joined the several women who catered snacks and drinks, and August Wallin volunteered to clean the clubroom.¹²⁶ In 1941, Mr Bert Carlson took over the responsibility of making sure club members got their coffee after meetings, although he later bowed to pressure and asked Mrs Hallgren for some assistance.¹²⁷ Also, when the Central Committee asked for help in the kitchen, four men and three women volunteered their services.¹²⁸ The women, however, at times responded in comic terror over the male effort in the kitchen: club secretary Helen Seaholm noted that, “us women were busily praying” when Sven had kitchen duty, and Bert Carlson’s ability to brew proper coffee was put in question.¹²⁹ Still, while these tentative steps toward gender equality must have been welcomed, they were not free of ambivalence: is possible that women felt a small twinge of unease when men ventured into one of the few spaces that previously had been theirs alone.¹³⁰

Women’s involvement in the Scandinavian Workers’ Club went deeper than just providing kitchen duty or drudging for funds. Women were elected to minor executive positions and commonly worked in committees that dealt with matters outside of the

¹²⁶ SAK, 27 February 1938, SAK, 8 May, 1939, and February 4, 1940.

¹²⁷ SAK, Minutes, January 5, 1941, and February 16, 1941.

¹²⁸ SAK, Minutes, January 19, 1941.

¹²⁹ SAK, Minutes, January 5, 1941, February 2, 1941, and February 16, 1941.

¹³⁰ Occasionally the minutes use the gender-neutral address “Comrade” for both men and women. While this most likely reflected the club’s socialist sympathies more than its attitudes toward divisions of labour, it is possible that the attempts to erase differences between men and women’s domestic duties were indeed influenced by socialist rhetoric. See for instance, SAK, Minutes, November 26, 1939.

domestic.¹³¹ Together with men they represented the club in the Scandinavian Central Committee, a multinational organisation of fourteen clubs and organisations from five countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Finland.¹³² With the increase in women members, SAC also experienced an increase in female initiatives, at least in non-political matters. When Seth Seaholm introduced an educational program with lectures on Swedish social democracy and Canadian history, Mrs Anna Larson, Mrs Anna Nelson, Miss Helga Larson, and Mrs Helen Seaholm tried to persuade the educational director to include topics that interested women.¹³³ While this proposal came to nought, women participated in other self-improvement activities, such as public speaking classes.¹³⁴

Increased female involvement, however, did not seem to include political issues. As the minutes got increasingly more informal, concentrating on social rather than on political issues, participation in political questions seemed to shrink correspondingly.¹³⁵ The minutes suggest that women rarely joined in political discussions or contributed motions regarding club participation in political events, but male enthusiasm seemed to have faded as well. Helen Seaholm noted that when the Chairman, Sid Seaholm, gave a

¹³¹ Maj Brundin were elected Vice Secretary in 1937, Helen Seaholm was Secretary in 1940, and Vega Carlsson was Financial Secretary 1940-1942. Apart from participating as delegates to the multi-national organization, the Central Committee, SAC women worked in program committees, they helped organize study circles, and they were part of the press committee. SAC Minutes, November 14, 1937

¹³² The Scandinavian Central Committee was in existence between 1936 and 1947. Olof Seaholm Collection— A7B1/3, [hereon OSC], “Records of Scandinavian Central Committee Meetings,” Box 6, UBC-SC. In June 1939 Mrs Hallgren, together with two male members, went to SCC meetings. SAK, 18 June, 1939.

¹³³ SAK, Minutes February 4, 1940.

¹³⁴ SAK, Minutes, December 15, 1940 and February 16, 1941. In 1940, Helen Seaholm enthused over the Ladies’ participation in public speaking classes. After a year of encouragement, however, she reproved the other female club members for their reluctance in joining the public speaking classes, but hoped “they might get better as time go on.”

¹³⁵ One exception is in 1943 when Mrs Hagman joined Mr Matson as delegate for the Consumer Council. SAK, Minutes, 4 July, 1943. It is likely that the Consumer Council was part of the politicized consumer movement in the 1940s where Communists, Social Democrats and Liberals vied for control over consumer groups. Consumer associations in Canada were mainly women’s domains, which might be one more indication of steps towards gender equality within the SAK. For more on Canadian consumer groups, see Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 84-100.

welcome speech during a successful social event, “his voice sounded as if it where [sic] far away, but that’s the women’s fault, they usually don’t like to listen to speeches.” This might not only have been a female trait that evening, since Helen added that, “several of our good speakers were on the floor, but no one really cared to listen.”¹³⁶ On the whole, during Helen’s time as secretary, the club meetings took on a much more social atmosphere than one might expect in a political organization. Of course, it is difficult to judge how much Helen Seaholm’s social focus actually reflected the atmosphere of the meetings. After she gave up the role as a secretary to Gus Hult in October 1941, the minutes returned to the political focus they had displayed in the late 1930s, which may reflect the secretarial emphasis. Certainly women valued the political aspect of the club, but many also seemed to have internalized societal expectations that women stay in the background and consequently, women’s participation only skirted political topics.

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Thus, the fact that Swedish women were a numerical minority did not prevent them from becoming victims of systematic discrimination in Swedish-Canadian associations and sources of employment. The experience of women in the public sphere, however, had little bearing on how Swedish-Canadian men saw women as marriage partners. In an article on masculinity among farmers in northern Sweden ethnologist Ella Johansson shows that Swedish men idealized and depended on women in a manner that differed from what occurred in countries where men measured their masculinity through their control over women. Johansson suggests that Swedes from farming communities admired women’s work ethic and that women played a significant role in moulding their sons’ characters, by helping them develop qualities that were central to young men’s self-image

¹³⁶ SAK, Minutes, February 2 1941.

as they crossed from being youngsters to manhood. Johansson suggests that since unmarried men were seen as youngsters regardless of age, the mother's role in the development of the male character was duplicated by the fiancée, and that only through marriage could men advance to the higher social position as fully mature men.¹³⁷

Marriage records from the Augusta Swedish Lutheran Church in Vancouver have survived from the years 1920 and 1926. They contain the registrations for a total of eighty-five Swedish-born men and fifty-five Swedish-born women. According to these records, Swedish men married at an average age of 33.8 years, and Swedish women at an average of 27.9 years, which is less of an age difference than the skewed demographics might suggest. Men entered into marriage at an older age, but not significantly so.

Women were also more likely to have been previously married than was the case for men.¹³⁸ Both men and women had a tendency of cross-national marriages, but men were more likely to marry outside of their nationality than women, which probably is a result of the scarcity of Swedish women. For instance, in 1941, there were 2 858 unmarried Swedish men and only 536 unmarried Swedish women in British Columbia, making it difficult finding a marriage partner within the national group.¹³⁹ In Augustana Church, of the eighty-five Swedish men, forty-two married non-Swedish women, while of fifty-five

¹³⁷ Ella Johansson, "Beautiful Men, Fine Women and Good Work People: Gender and Skill in Northern Sweden, 1850-1950," *Gender & History* 1.2 (Summer 1989): 200-212. Angus McLaren notes a similar reluctance to accept unmarried men as a fully integrated part of society in Europe, where some social scientists even considered single men as social threat. McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity*, 55.

¹³⁸ Of the eighty-five men, two were divorced and three widowed; of the fifty-five women, three were divorced and six widowed. Registry of Marriage, Augustana Lutheran Church.

¹³⁹ Census of Canada, Vol 1, Table 19, population by conjugal condition, birthplace and sex. For provinces and territories, 1941. This table include Swedish-born of all ages; however, the portion of children in this immigrant group would have been small.

Swedish women, twelve married non-Swedish men. Both men and women who cross married tended to marry either other Scandinavians or those of Anglo-Saxon origin.¹⁴⁰

In letters sent to family and friends at home, Swedish men frequently dwelled on the lack of available women in Canada.¹⁴¹ When Martin Johansson worked in Alberta and British Columbia in 1928-1934 he saw Western Canada as a dreary country, with few possibilities for romantic love. As an emigrant he felt at disadvantage in heterosexual situations:

Me and a fellow from Dalarna [a Swedish county] were joking around with a couple of girls from a coffee shop when I was last down to Proctor. They were, or seemed to be, decent girls. Of course there are many decent women here, but what an emigrant can get you can figure out for yourself. In particular when one is not known at any place, and have to be out in the wilderness months on end. It is a terrible trial one has to go through, and if I had known what I now know I would not have gone to Canada, no rather to Siberia.¹⁴²

When Johansson worked in the British Columbia forests a few months later he was stunned by the substandard conditions in isolated camps where men crowded together for months on end in a homosocial environment. In a study of Italian men in Canada, Robert Harney writes that, "life in isolated work camps brutalized [the workers] in the truest sense of the word . . . [and] work camp life in Canada was usually worse than in the

¹⁴⁰ Of eighty-five marriages by Swedish-born men during the years 1920-1926, forty-three men married Swedish-born women, fifteen married women born in other Scandinavian countries, eight married British women, and nineteen Swedish men married Canadian or US-born women. Of the latter group, two US and three Canadian women had Swedish parents. Of fifty-five marriages, forty-three Swedish-born women married Swedish-born men, three married other Scandinavians, three married Finnish men, three married men from Great Britain, two married men from the US or Canada, and one Swedish woman married a man from Estonia. See Registry of Marriage, Augustana Lutheran Church. Madeline Richards' study on intermarriages shows that Scandinavians tended to marry either inside their ethnic group or to marry those of Anglo-Saxon origin. Madeline Richard, *Ethnic Groups and Marital Choices* (1991).

¹⁴¹ These letters only deal with men who claimed a heterosexual belonging. The scarcity of letters in general from Swedish immigrants in Canada, and the improbability such a vulnerable group would reveal the sexuality in letters makes it difficult to do much more than speculate about the experience of gay Swedish immigrants in B.C.. For a discussion of the difficulty of researching homosexuality in the resource industry, see Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour/Le Travail* 23 (spring 1989), 159-69.

¹⁴² Hej på dig brorsan, Proctor, 15 Mars, 1930. These letters have been translated as closely to the original meaning as possible. For the a transcript of the original Swedish text, see Appendix 11.

United States.” Harney denies that this “decline into brutishness” led to any kind of untamed sexuality, but suggests that it caused the migrants to develop an inferior complex toward the Anglo-Saxon population and toward city folk in general.¹⁴³ Letters from Swedes in Canada underscore Harney’s thesis. This is particularly strong with Martin, who with a mixture of surprise, impotence, and dismay describe his and his work mates’ situation:

I don’t advise you to come here; stay where you are. It is a damned country this. Everything is expensive and only work and no amusements. I won’t see a woman all winter . . . Here in B.C. they work Sunday and Monday. No religion, just swear words and money. No one has any peace of mind . . . I cannot understand it, Swedes who have not been home for 15 -30 years, and who live most of their time in the woods. But it is so that when they have finished a job they go to a city and drink up the money and then it is gone. Well, of course, some are married and have families and then they have something to live for. I never thought that Canada would have been such an empty land without interest. Imagine what a life, lie in a hovel all winter long and not even so much as a female cook.¹⁴⁴

Clearly, Swedes experienced a similar situation as the one Harney describes among Italian men in central Canada, and the lack of women magnified Martin’s dismay over the labour conditions for immigrants in British Columbia.¹⁴⁵

Martin’s isolation from the opposite sex would have been slightly less noticeable had he worked as a logger in the Swedish forests. Ella Johansson notes that most of the larger logging camps had a female cook from the 1920s, and that the men generally respected the women and refrained from sexist language or behaviours. Likewise,

¹⁴³ Robert F. Harney, “Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930,” in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi ed., The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America (Toronto, 1978), 87.

¹⁴⁴ “Hej på dig broder,” Decker Lake, den 14 oktober, 1928.

¹⁴⁵ The sexual isolation that troubled Martin might have been more noticeable in B.C. than in other parts of Canada. Ian Radforth notes that Finnish women were the most celebrated cooks in northern Ontario, and that women in the camps did not create problems either of sexual or work related nature. They were granted respect and since they performed traditionally female tasks there was no sense of competition with male workers. See Ian Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Chapter 5.

women occasionally crossed the gender barrier and worked alongside men or hauled their own timber, and female relatives at times stayed for longer or shorter periods in the loggers' cabins. Despite these differences between the Swedish and the British Columbian work environment in the forest, the logging camps in both places were mainly male.¹⁴⁶

Daydreams of the opposite sex were not limited to the heterosexual courtship, but included a comradeship among men who passed what was seen as a normal, longed-for, and traditional rite in the masculine life. The memory of women that they had courted through their youth gave rise to hope of importing a similar complex fellowship to Canada. In several of his letters to his brother Folke, Martin equalled romantic contact with male friendship, social community, and even steady work:

Are you all well and do you have a girlfriend or not. How is it now with the girls that I swarmed around a couple of years ago? Are they married and happy or are they milling around crushing hearts still? Are Elsa and Gunnar still together, does Elsa still work in Gislaved? Hildur in Ambjörnarp, who I was a bit in love with, is she still working in Gislaved too and who is she courting now? And Ruth A., Ingrid H., Margit C. and all the other lively girls who one fell in love with the one night but not the other, where are they now? Say Hi to them from me. . . . I sat and looked at a picture of the Ambjörnarpa girls, and looked most of all at Hildur. Tell her that if she is free I will come home and court her. Ask her to write to me . . . There's a competition here of who has the prettiest picture of a woman and I think that the picture that I have of the Ambjörnarpa girls will take the first price.¹⁴⁷

Hope you write soon, I wait daily for letters . . . Write about what fun you have and what women you are seeing, how are the old girls doing, they are probably married and happy, with children and such now. Is Elsa in Gislaved still and do they work at the factory, the girls and Torsten. Think if one could come home and get work there; they don't know how good they have it.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ See Ella Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner. Maskulinitet och modernitet i norrländskt skogsarbete*, (Lund, Sweden, 1994), 134-139.

¹⁴⁷ Hej på dig brorsan, Proctor, 15 Mars, 1930.

¹⁴⁸ Hejsan Broder, Proctor, 22 June, 1930.

At times, to quell the loneliness, men wrote to relatives and friends in Sweden asking for a so called “mail-order Bride,” that is, a single woman who could be persuaded to move to North America. When Per Nilsson wrote to his fiancée Märta Sundström in Sweden he at times included pleas from his friend, Johan Hedin, that Märta ask if any of the women that Johan remembered would move to North America – and to him:

Now I have to speak for Hedin for a while he asks if you know if Lina Sundström is married and if Emma Svenson has any fiancé these days. And he says that you are welcome to get him a fiancée but he would like to hear something about who you would pick for his future bride. And he furthermore would like to hear a bit how the girls at home are doing.¹⁴⁹

Johan also wrote directly to Märta in the same errand:

How is it with Emelie, has she any fiancé now, say hi to her from me, it would be fun to hear from here sometime when you write to Per you could say something about how it is with the girls fun to hear how they are doing.¹⁵⁰

In the minds of male immigrants, women had wider roles that were not limited to sexuality. The separate sphere rhetoric in Sweden, as in Canada, supposes that men – fathers or husbands – supported their female “dependants.” That image obscured the fact that women’s waged labour played a role in survival in Canada since some women in Sweden sent money to male friends and relatives in Canada, while others helped after emigrating by sharing their wages in Canada with their male compatriots. Women thus had a direct economic function, both in financing men’s emigration and upkeep in Canada, which could only have strengthened single men’s emotional dependence on women as a part of the secure everyday life. When the single mother Märta Sundström supported herself as a maid in the early twentieth century she had to stretch her wages to pay for her own and her son’s keep. That she also lent money to her future father-in-law,

¹⁴⁹ Per Nilsson to Märta Sundström [undated, but likely October 1902], R.E. at SIE.

¹⁵⁰ Johan Hedin to Märta Sundström, [undated].

and to her ex-fiancé and her son's father, Karl Solem, who emigrated 1902, must have made her situation even more precarious, but this is not belaboured in her letters.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Swedish women helped support friends and relatives in Canada. In 1904, Märta Sundström's friend, Ingeborg Holmstad emigrated from Jämtland, Sweden, to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ingeborg's father was already living in Winnipeg, and when she wrote Märta of her father and all the other men's living conditions she cautioned Märta not to reveal to other village people how "terrible" the men's life were in Canada, in particular those who had no woman to care for them.¹⁵² Ingeborg's letters illustrate how women took for granted their economic responsibility for family members and male acquaintances from their home county:

Well, one has to work hard here but it's better pay [than in Sweden] from 8 to 4 I get one dollar . . . I have five places to wash and work at but you will hear that I have many to support on my own, Karl and Pit came here to Winnipeg in early April. Pit live with us for a month he did not have a cent to pay for food but what he had he drank up in three days. Karl was a little bit better he . . . had a little bit to live on . . . we had another whose name was Tryge from Östersund he also owes me 10 dollars.¹⁵³

According to Ingeborg, single men in Canada lived an abysmal existence that was closely connected to alcohol abuse, poverty, loneliness and illness. She believed that this hopelessness could only be solved with the help of a woman:

Kvarnstöm mostly sits at Skandia hotel, Oskar Larsen plays cards and drinks . . . Karl and Petter works with dad, but Drinks throughout and not enough that they drink themselves but they trick others. I am glad that I am here so dad has a woman and he says himself that there is much too much booze so it is not good. It is a terrible order and they say who are here that dad was one of the best but

¹⁵¹ During the famine year 1902 Märta lend 30 Swedish crowns to her future father-in-law, Nils Persson. Märta earned 30 crowns a month, and she paid 10 crowns to her son's keep, and the remaining 20 crowns paid Märta's room and board, plus clothing and shoes for Märta and Sigurd. See, Märta to Per, "Min Trolovade min Älskling i lif och död," Undersåker, 2 November, 1902.

¹⁵² Ingeborg Holmsta to Mrs Sundström [Märta's mother] and Märta Sundström, 28 maj, [No year, but likely 1904.], R.E. at SIE.

¹⁵³ Ingeborg Holmsta to Mrs Sundström and Märta Sundström, 28 maj, [No year, but likely 1904.], R.E. at SIE. Ingeborg Homsta emigrerade år 1904 tillsammans med maken Salomon och fyra barn.

he is sick himself but now he is right happy. . . Oh the poor darlings who are here . . . there are a thousand men on the hotels and they are telling lies to each other until they are all the same and then they are thrown in jail and have to pay [a fine].¹⁵⁴

Karl has gone to British Columbia . . . and said that he would send some money as soon as he could. You must not say anything about the drinking when you write or if you come but I will not give Karl your money but I'll send them [back to you?] in a letter.¹⁵⁵

Ingeborg's letters illustrates circumstances that men only hinted at in their letters, and it is certain that she believed that without women, men were in physical and emotional distress.

The saddest witness to this sexual loneliness is found in the above-mentioned Karl Solem's letters to Märta Sundström. Karl and Märta had an out-of-wedlock son, Sigurd, but they had broken their sexual relationship prior to Karl's emigration to Canada in 1902. Karl's letters are permeated with his desire to return to a time when his and Märta's relationship was still viable, and he insisted on his role as a provider for his son:

I want you to be so kind as to send This Letter to Your Mother so she can see that I am Well I want you to remember what I asked that you will be Good to Sige¹⁵⁶ I want that you shall Care for my Bumblebok [?] when I get Things ready I am thinking that I will send [money?] now as before and a little bit more I will send 30 Dollar on august 2 to Erik and What is left of what he shall have you shall put in my Book I want that You shall say to Erik that he take out the 10 crowns that I have coming from jakob I don't want that you shall carry any hatred towards me I know that I did not do right the last Sunday that I was home¹⁵⁷ I want that You shall answer as soon as you get the Letter because it is fun to hear how you at home are doing when I am so far away in the forest.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Ingeborg Homsta to "Sister" and "mother" [no names], 14 Februari, 1905, R.E. at SIE.

¹⁵⁵ Ingeborg Holmsta to Mrs Sundström and Märta Sundström, 28 maj, [No year, but likely 1904.], R.E. at SIE.

¹⁵⁶ Karl referred to Sigurd in terms of endearment either as "Sige," "Sigge," "Sigur," or "Bumlebok." Throughout the letters he rarely used punctuations and there is no seeming pattern to his choice between lower and upper case.

¹⁵⁷ The letters do not reveal the incident Karl referred to, but they do show that prior to his emigration he housed with Märta's mother and Sigurd, and that Karl was trying to win Märta back.

¹⁵⁸ Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 13 July [no year, but likely 1902], R.E. at SIE.

Jonas Frykman maintains that while men in Swedish rural societies could not be forced to pay upkeep for their out-of wedlock children, fathers who gave the mothers a one-time sum of money retained their honour as men.¹⁵⁹ Karl, on the other hand, insisted on a more permanent place in his son's life, despite having left Sweden. This underscores his longing to assume his role as a family father.

Karl's letters also suggest that in some instances, single male immigrants found it more difficult to get established than did men with families. Karl abandoned the thought of getting a homestead in Manitoba since he felt that such work demanded a wife and a few children to help with the work:

And then I should tell you that there was rejoicing when the farming could get going and then I should tell you how it is yes those who have taken land for 100 acres . . . and then they shall get help to build and seed for the first [year?] they shall not pay anything for the land if I only had me a Wife I had not worried at all about taking a loan I then should tell you that it is much better here than in Sweden I am thinking of that I will see You once more if I shall live and I will ask You to be kind and tell me if there is anything new from home . . . I think a lot of my sige and You and if it so happens that you can find travel company with anyone who shall travel here in June because it is said that the family to each and everyone [who take a homestead?] shall get to travel and then I should ask You if You would like to come to me and then You should tell me so I can pay for You what is cost for You and for sige but I must tell You that it is much better here than in Sweden I must tell You that You must answer me on what I ask you I think about you every Day You should know so I don't know what to do . . .¹⁶⁰

Karl valued fatherhood, a social role that he returned to in all his letters to Märta.

Through the clumsy advice he offered regarding Sigurd's upbringing he could dream back to a happier time when he was more in control:

¹⁵⁹ Jonas Frykman, *Horan in bondesamhället* (Lund, 1977), 176.

¹⁶⁰ Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 2 Februari, 1903, R.E. at SIE. Correspondence between Märta Sundström and her future husband Per Nilsson suggest that Karl wanted Märta and Sigurd to join him in Canada. Märta, however, declined the offer and married Per Nilsson, who legally adopted Sigurd as his son in 1905. Erlin Roising, Interview with author, Stockholm, Sweden, October 2001.

. . . and I will ask of you that you are so kind to make sure that Sigge does not get his Legs wet in the spring flood . . .¹⁶¹

You ask for how long you may have the Money that I sent You those You may have until I tell you there is no hurry with them I think [want] that Your father shall take some and buy a pair of shoes for Sige for when he shall Start School with my Money . . . because I think of the little guy every day out here for one can see Indians who come a moving It can be up to 10 persons who have several hundred Horses and here there are lots of snakes of all kinds.¹⁶²

. . . and I must ask You to be so Kind and Care of the Money that I sent you I send 30 Dollars and of That I want You to take 5 crowns for You 5 to Mother 5 to Sige and The rest I want that You put into my Book for I want to pay You for Your trouble later for I will send you a little bit every so often now . . . I think of little Sige that he may have one crown to buy a Christmas tree on top of the 5 . . . I would like to see how you are fixing for Christmas but I am too far Away but You must see to that Sige's feet does not get cold when he walks to school for if You don't have any [money] you can buy Shoes or what he needs and then I want You to tell me About that because I do not want him to suffer from any wants because I am a man of my word . . .¹⁶³

The letters suggest that far from being seen as inferior beings, the Swedish woman became a symbol of the security that the male emigrants had left behind.¹⁶⁴ Clearly, an idealized view of women did not prevent men from accepting that women's work and wages were systematically inferior to those of men. But this gender discrimination was more a result of a social reality than a planned oppression by individual men. While in reality male and female spheres overlapped, the societal ideal insisted that women remained confined within the domestic sphere in order for men to take possession of their public masculine roles. These conflicting demands created a

¹⁶¹ Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 19 april, 1903, R.E. at SIE.

¹⁶² Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 15 juli, 1903, R.E. at SIE.

¹⁶³ Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 3 December, 1903, R.E. at SIE. Note: there are no documented contacts with Karl Solem after these letters. However, Karl's son, Sigurd Nilsson, emigrated to Manitoba in 1919, where he eventually worked as a typesetter on the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Canada Posten*. It is unknown, however, if Sigurd tried to contact his biological father, Karl Solem. Erlin Roising, Interview with author.

¹⁶⁴ Naturally, all single men did not idealize women. For a good description of a more misogynist picture, see Carina Rönnqvist, "Scattered Swedes and Single Settlers: On Ethnic Identity Reflected in Nationalistic Sentiments, Gender and Class in 20th-Century Canada," in Daniel Lindmark, ed., *Swedishness Reconsidered: Three Centuries of Swedish-American Identities* (Umeå, 1999), p 106.

society that ignored the emotional, economic, organizational, and labour-related needs that women fulfilled, leaving women ostensibly subordinate to men in all public situations.

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As this chapter indicates, women's personal, social and occupational roles were thus closely connected, and not dramatically different from the ones they experienced in Sweden. Because of their greater numbers, Swedish women played a stronger role in politics and in the labour movement in Sweden than they were able to in B.C., but in both countries women struggled under a firmly entrenched patriarchal system. The work situation differed slightly, since in B.C. women might have found it easier to start their own businesses, as long these catered to male needs. In fact, they were welcomed in business and in paid labour in British Columbia, as long as they worked in a traditional female sphere, tending to men's needs. Taking advantage of the skewed gender demography, Swedish women made a living feeding and housing single men who were starved for female companionship and untrained to look after their own domestic needs. Likewise, sources indicate that a similar rigid gender division relegated women to a supporting role in Swedish churches and club organizations in Vancouver and Matsqui. Women's participation was largely taken for granted, but this did not stop them from performing vital duties as fundraisers and organizers. As Karin Nordberg concludes about women in the Swedish labour movement, Swedish women in B.C. rarely protested their subservient roles but seemingly accepted them as common sense; that, however, did not render them totally powerless either. They only accepted the amount of work they felt they could reasonably handle, and church-going women rigorously defended their

personal freedom if they felt that church officials were unfairly intrusive into their private lives and choices.

In conclusion, the frontier thesis – the idea that women benefited from living in a society where men outnumbered women – is therefore ambiguous. Clearly the scarcity of Swedish women made it easier for those who wanted to enter into matrimony, and it also created opportunities for self-employment.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the opposite is also true: that the scarcity of Swedish women in B.C. prevented them from being able to form cohesive and effective groups that protected women's interests. The low number of women opened up employment opportunities and areas of self-employment, but only such that served men's domestic needs. Outside of the domestic sphere, women were not notably empowered. It seems that Swedish-Canadian women only occasionally and with difficulty managed to make their voices heard in the Swedish-Canadian public arenas that were dominated by Swedish men. There is also very little sense that the women fought against the restrictions placed upon them by their male compatriots. Instead, Swedish women in British Columbia seemed to have largely accepted, perhaps even internalized the notion that men were in charge of the public space. This might partly be a result of documentation, since men usually kept minutes and perhaps deliberately or unconsciously omitted female participation, thus creating what might be an erroneous impression that women were voiceless, having only background roles. As seen in the Scandinavian Workers Club, when Helen Seaholm kept minutes, she regularly recorded women's reactions to club events, a practice that stopped when Gus Holt took over the

¹⁶⁵ This was not limited to Swedish women in B.C.. Melanie Buddle shows a clear correlation between marriages and female self-employment. She notes that both the conjugal rate and the proportion of self-employment among women in B.C. were higher than what was the case in rest of Canada. See Buddle, "The Business of Women," Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, pp 46 and 52.

role of secretary. In the work world, as well, Swedish women remained in recognized domestic arenas. On the other hand, when it came to matrimony, letters from Swedish men in Canada indicate a sense of respect and dependency that incorporated sexual, familial, and economic concerns.

Conclusion

Emigration and immigration were one seemingly identical movement that nonetheless affected individuals, groups, and societies differently in the origin and receiving countries. The out migration had structural effects on the sending society; while life continued, new and surprising players sometimes filled the places of those who left. Just as emigration could act as a spur to entice others to seek new seemingly hopeful and exciting alternatives in North America, the desertion of many community members could act as a brake for others.

Emigration also affected communities in Sweden. Parental strategies in Långasjö, a Swedish parish with a high degree of male emigration, determined the outgoing movement, particularly for first-born sons. When sons reached adulthood years before the parents were able or willing to relinquish the farm, the chances that first-born sons would emigrate increased. It is possible that both parents and sons viewed this as a temporary measure, but the Långasjö group

suggests that only a minority of the sons returned to the family farms. Family strategies thus became push factors that affected a group that normally is not associated with emigration, and younger siblings, brothers and daughters became beneficiaries. The fate of the emigrating firstborns does not indicate that they profited from their changed circumstances. The majority who persisted in British Columbia remained in low-income labour occupations, although a few acquired their own businesses, homesteads or fruit orchards.¹ Moreover, ten of twenty-three never married, which is a much lower conjugal rate than for their contemporaries in Sweden. Thus, what might have started as a temporary measure for young men who were unwilling to work as farmhands for several years while waiting to take over the family farm ended up for most as a permanent move, but rarely to a more successful existence, either socially or economically.

Women in Långasjö also seem to have been able to take over family farms to a much greater degree than normally occurred in Sweden. This might explain why women were more underrepresented among Långasjö emigrants in comparison to Swedish-born in British Columbia in general. The departure of so many young men opened up opportunities for their sisters, as parents realized their emigrating sons would not return to take over the farm. A woman's farming, however, still depended on her having a husband, and the power of the patriarchal society is evident in that farm ownership was registered in the husband's name, even when the farm originated from the wife's parents.

If it is true that the high emigration of first-born sons accounted for the large number of women taking over family farms in Långasjö, then this movement may be partly responsible for

¹ In total fifty-one first-born sons emigrated, and of those thirteen moved to the USA and fourteen remigrated to Sweden. Of the twenty-four who persisted, ten men remained single; nine died before age fifty. Fourteen remained workers all their lives, either with the CPR or as miners; three became CPR foremen, two of those road masters; three were self employed; and three acquired farms or fruit orchards.

the low number of Långasjö women in British Columbia. If possibilities of property inheritance in Sweden served to strangle women's emigration rate, then this sharpened an already male-dominant demographic. Women were even scarcer in the Långasjö group than was the case for Swedish-Canadians in general. The low number of Swedish women might account for the low conjugal rate among Långasjö male immigrants who often worked in isolated places and reportedly found it difficult to communicate with Anglo-Canadian women who were also in relatively short supply. Family strategies thus affected both the society in Långasjö and the quality of life for emigrants who, had they stayed in Sweden, would have been considered privileged members of the parish.

The control group from Långasjö also provides a clear example on how the Swedish occupational background played a secondary role after immigration. Male Långasjö immigrants in British Columbia entered a world where skills and experiences from Sweden were of secondary importance. Many young men worked in dangerous occupations of which they had no previous experience, and the result was often tragic. For instance, John Karlsson died on his first day at the Canadian Pacific Railway, during a test run as a brakeman; Alfred Fransson died during a collision between two engine trolleys; Artur Olsson froze to death during a snowstorm in 1934, when the Depression forced him to hunt for food; Alfred Johansson was killed in a snow ploughing accident in Slocan Junction; Erik Carlsson died in a snow avalanche; August Värn drowned; Johan Gustafsson was victim of dynamiting for the CPR; Axel Karlsson expired in a logging accident on Vancouver Island; Karl Karlsson was killed by mine gas poison; and Karl Johnson and Erik Sandkvist, in a train accident in Rogers Pass in 1910. Johan Petersson died from pneumonia, Johan Karlsson from tuberculosis, Sven Gunnar Svensson from the Spanish Flu, while Hjalmar Svensson perished from typhoid in 1922. Of 292 Långasjö men who

immigrated in B.C., thirty-five died before their fiftieth birthday; twenty-six of those were forty or younger. Others disappeared, with family in Sweden unsure if they moved on, willingly staying out of touch, or if they died among strangers who did not know how, or care enough to contact their Swedish kin.² Clearly, the new world was as hazardous as it was promising.

While occupation in B.C. was determined by available jobs rather than by previous training, immigrants created an unofficial hiring procedure that enabled them to find work for friends and kin from the home parish. As Chapter 4 indicates, working for the Canadian Pacific Railway was foreign to anything they had done in Sweden, but employment to some extent still depended on their background since earlier immigrants hired and trained newcomers from home so that they in turn could offer the same benefit to friends and relatives who emigrated later. Although the move from section man to section foreman might not seem significant, it affected their social status, since foremen tended to be much more likely to marry and have families, which is important both for personal satisfaction and social acceptance. Nonetheless, while their familiarity with farm work did not cause them to seek similar occupations in B.C., they were able to use their Swedish background as an informal ethnic hiring bureau, and words of new openings spread quickly both among Långasjö workers already in B.C. and among future immigrants still in the home parish.

Långasjö male immigrants might have clustered in railway work, but the stereotypical Swedish employment in B.C. was logging. Swedes, however, were not as focused on logging as many accounts suggest. Swedish immigration to British Columbia peaked in the 1920s, but while Swedish men were overrepresented in logging, agriculture, construction work, fishing, manufacturing, transportation, and mining were not far behind. Research in the Swedish forest industry uniformly also suggests that Swedish loggers viewed themselves as independent

² A total of 15 Långasjö men either disappeared or lost touch with their Swedish family.

producers rather than proletarians, making it difficult to argue that the Swedish heritage fostered a greater sense of radicalism in British Columbia. Neither does evidence suggest that Swedes in Canada were radicals who dominated in forest unions. A Norwegian and a Swede-Finnish union leader were conspicuous activists, and helped create the illusion that loggers' unions were Scandinavian led, but few Swedes had leading roles. Scandinavians and Swedes were important both as workers and as union supporters, but they never dominated in the workforce, and were often underrepresented in union membership lists.

It is also difficult to argue that the Swedish background influenced political choices in British Columbia. As seen in Chapter 6, Långasjö railway workers in B.C. who came from a politically conservative agrarian region became strong supporters of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, the union for railway employees. Similarly, Martin Johansson's letters home indicate that he was politically unaware, a passive supporter of the political right in Sweden, until the Depression radicalized him during his time in British Columbia. Johansson, however, returned to Sweden where he operated a private company together with his brothers, and while he remained convinced that only the Social Democratic Labour Party supported workers, he reverted to the political passivity of his youth.³ Many of these Swedish immigrants were either from conservative farming families, where the lifestyle encouraged individualism over collectivism, or they had been too marginalized in Sweden to be in a position to organize. In British Columbia, however, they were joined in a working-class society where they needed to stick together as kinsmen and workers. Since the labour movement was already making inroads in the logging industry and was entrenched among railway workers, Swedish immigrants would have found it a natural place to congregate. Thus, employment

³ Eva St Jean, "Letters from the Promised Land: The Ambiguous Radicalization of an Immigrant Worker in Western Canada, 1928-1934," *Labour/Le Travail* 53 (Spring 2004): 201-219.

conditions and circumstances in Canada had a much greater influence than any regional or national political powers in Sweden.

Likewise, the basic political adherence of politicians Rolf Bruhn, Olof Hanson, and Oscar Eliason depended on where on the class ladder they climbed. Bruhn and Olson believed that the capitalism espoused by the Conservative and Liberal parties was best able to protect their own interest and that of their country and province, but they also sought to flex their parties to embrace a better provision for the working class. It is also possible that the differences between a group and individual migration shaped the ideologies of these three men. While Oscar Eliasson came from a politically conservative background, he immigrated to B.C. as part of a kin group whose well being depended on their cooperating and helping one another. This ethnic help system, however, created an occupational structure that might have been restrictive as well as secure; knowing he had the opportunities to advance within the C.P.R. might have prevented the type of risk taking that proved profitable for Olof Hanson and Rolf Bruhn. Moreover, the presence of an established union likely strengthened the community factor among Långasjö railway workers, making union involvement a natural extension to their ethnic bonds. Hanson and Bruhn, however, travelled singly and relied on their own wit and brawn to survive and prosper. This did not prevent their sympathies and understanding of working-class suffering, but their personal experiences in North America likely pulled them toward the ideology of capitalism and individualism rather than socialism and collectivism. Thus, Chapter 6 supports the notion that the social class immigrants reached in the receiving country was more relevant to their political loyalties than were their political and economic backgrounds from Sweden.

Women's experiences – whether politically, occupationally, or socially – were much different from that of their male compatriots. Women in Sweden were highly organized both in

unions and in political parties, yet there is little evidence that they were able to transfer that activism to British Columbia. This is partly because there were too few Swedish women in B.C. to provide the ethnic support network needed for political action, and partly because women tended to work in occupations that isolated them from each other, whether as domestic servants in families or as self employed boarding-house keepers. These occupations were notoriously difficult platforms for any kind of political or union activism, regardless of ethnic background. However, while Swedish men in B.C. often found employment for which they had no previous training, women's occupational history did not differ much between Sweden and British Columbia. In either place women were tied to domestic service related occupations, whether in waged work or as self employed.

While Swedish women were not able to participate politically in B.C., they were active in Swedish religious and social organizations, and they were much more likely to marry than were Swedish men. Creating a family is an integral part of human existence, and while women were less likely to succeed financially or advance occupationally than were men, they had a romantic and social advantage that might have been equally rewarding. Carina Rönnqvist argues that the occupational goal of Swedish women was ultimately marriage;⁴ if so women were generally more successful than were their male compatriots both occupationally and socially.

Nonetheless, regardless of sex, while most Swedish immigrants remained in labour oriented jobs in B.C., class background was less influential in determining occupation and political adherence than were circumstances in the new country. Male immigrants were able to cross class boundaries through hard work and astute investments, but women were restrained by occupational expectations that prevented them from crossing invisible but very real gender

⁴ Carina Rönnqvist, 'Kvinnans sfär,' "Svea folk i Babels land. Svensk identitet i Kanada under 1900-talets första hälft," Ph.D. dissertation, Umeå, forthcoming, 130-140.

boundaries. Swedish immigration in B.C. was largely a working-class movement, and work environment and social conditions there had stronger consequences for their political and cultural responses than did past experiences in Sweden. When wages were inadequate or labour conditions unbearable, they responded by walking away or by joining others in organized protest. Likewise, the isolation of male workers helped create a male-oriented culture. Women, on the other hand, more often lived in family settings in established communities, and found it easier to find work – even if low paid – and to create families. These men and women arrived with private hopes, fears, and expectations, most often to work in labour intensive occupations in British Columbia. But whatever personal background and experience they carried with them from Sweden, it was the casting mould of working conditions and society in British Columbia that most effectively shaped their political and social life as immigrants. Thus, framed by their work, Swedish immigrants created a new world and culture that depended not only on strength of body and character, but also on the solidarity and welcome they found among kinsmen and among fellow workers of all nationalities.

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Appendix 1

Afgångsbetyg från *Skrekarhytte* folkskola.

Gossen Erik Engen
från *Mogroevuan*
hvilken är född den *20/2 1872* och i härvarande skola begagnat
undervisningen under *9* terminer *667* dagar, har vid i dag anställt
avgångsförhör befunnits ega följande insigter:

Inmanläsning af svensk och latinsk stil *AB*
Biblisk historia *AB*
Luthers katekes med utveckling och bibelspråk *A*
Skrifning *C*
Räkning till och med *Kedjeräkning* *A*
Modersmålet och satslära *AB*
Geografi *AB*
Historia svensk och allmän *AB*
Naturlära *B*
Geometri *AB*
Teckning *B*

Och har *han* under sin skolgång deltagit uti öfningarne i kyrkosång, gymnastik
och trädgårdsskötsel, samt i allmänhet ådagalagt *A* flit och
..... *AB* uppförande.

Viker och *Skrekarhytte* den *10 Dec 1885*

A. G. Nylander
Lärare.

Närvarande vittne:

C. A. Adde

Betygen äro:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------------------------|
| För insigter och flit: | | För uppförande: |
| Med beröm godkänd. | (A) | Mycket godt. |
| Icke utan beröm godkänd. | (AB) | Godt. |
| Godkänd. | (B) | Pålitligt. |
| Försvartig. | (C) | Mindre pålitligt. |
| Underhaltig. | (D) | Då'igt. |

Appendix 2

There are three possible ways of grouping Långasjö farms into social divisions: by measuring acreage (*hectare*); by using the Swedish *mantal* system; or by looking at taxation value. Neither measurement is perfect, but perhaps the least satisfying one is the seemingly most straightforward: the hectare division. Within the same county, the land could be more or less useful as farmland depending on soil conditions, amount of rocks, or the extent of forested areas. Thus, before 1920 when Långasjö first started to engage in commercialized forestry, a 50-hectare farm containing little arable land and a high degree of forested areas could not be compared to one of similar size on prime farmland. The fact that hectare is rarely used to identify farms in documents pertaining to farm sizes suggests that it held little meaning in determining the farm's productivity.

Most historians of agricultural development in Sweden use what is called the *mantal* division. Traditionally, farms were only defined in *mantal*, which also historically determined taxation value. When it came into effect in the seventeenth century, one *mantal* (1/1) signified the portion of cultivatable land an average family needed to survive. According to Christer Winberg, "A homestead should be a landholding of such size and productivity so that it can support the farmer and its family and give the same opportunity to pay taxes and perform other obligations that attached to property ownership."¹

One *mantal* thus differs in numbers of acres depending on the quality of the land, since a farm set on fertile land would have fewer acres than one set on barren ground. It

¹ Christer Winberg, Folkökning och proletarisering. Kring den sociala strukturomvandlingen på Sveriges landsbygd under den agrara revolutionen (Göteborg, Sweden, 1975), 39.

did not take long, however, before farmers started to divide the land in order to provide a livelihood for several adult children.² During the period in this study, Långasjö farms only rarely were half a mantal or larger. The most common farm measure in Långasjö was 1/8 of a mantal, but divisions over the years had created farms as small as 1/100 of a mantal, but certainly, such “farms” could not support a family.³

While most social and historical studies on Swedish agriculture rely on the mantal system,⁴ Christer Persson, points out that farms of the same mantal measure could have different taxation value. Persson suggests that farmers upgraded the farmland and the buildings to different degree, and that farms with potentially the same value varied in the size of production. This, he means, inhibits the use of the mantal system for studies that differentiate between farmers in Locknevi, and that it is not functionally connected to arable land or farmers’ access to means of production. Although Persson’s suggestions give food for thought, using the taxation value in social differentiation has its own problems. Persson notes how farms were re-evaluated unevenly, and that irregularities occurred when some farms in an area were reassigned a new value while others were not re-evaluated. Thus, the evaluations did not always “show the true value of the farm holding.”⁵ Ulla Rosén points out other difficulties with using the taxation value, since Persson’s figures indicates that when it came to sales, the taxation value was set at an

² For a discussion on farm divisions according to the mantal measure, see Ulla Rosén, Himlajord och handelsvara. Ägobyten av egendom i Kumla socken 1780-1880, 25-31. (Lund 1994).

³ Christer Winberg notes that the division of farms was part of the proletarianization process that created a new source of labour in Sweden. From these small landholdings emerged men who became seasonal labour migrants in Swedish railway and canal constructions, or who went to Göteborg or Stockholm in search of temporary employment. Winberg, Folkökning och proletarisering, 185.

⁴ See for example three substantial social studies regarding Swedish emigration, Emigrationsutredningen, 1908, 1910, and 1911, Winberg’s Folkökning och proletarisering 197, and the more recent study by Ulla Rosén, Himlajord och handelsvara (1994).

⁵ Christer Persson, Jorden, Bonden och hans familj. En studie av bondejordbruket i en socken i norra Småland under 1800-talet, med särskild hänsyn till jordägande, sysselsättning och familje- och hushållsbildning (Stockholm, 1992), 151 and 199.

artificial low at some properties.⁶ This observation was also done in a 1910 study on the causes of emigration, when Nils Wahlin points out that in *inter vivos transfers*, when a grown child takes over the farm from a still-living parent, the taxation value of the farm was set particularly low, in order to afford buying out the siblings.⁷ Magnus Perlestam tries to avoid the problem by using both the mantal and the taxation value, but he points out that the taxation value also depends on the value of the buildings, while the mantal refers to the supporting quality of the land. On the whole, however, the two generally corresponds. “The trend is clear: a high mantal translate into a high taxation value” [Transl.].⁸ Since the taxation value thus depends on variables that are difficult to control and have little to do with the real value of the property, it is hazardous to use in determining its influence on emigrating children.

Using taxation value to determine social gradation in Långasjö poses other challenges as well. In this study, 1880-1930, one must consider taxation values in relation to the time period, and take into account inflation and the changes in resale value of forests. Prior to the First World War, forestland in Långasjö had little value,⁹ and it is difficult to state when logging became profitable for individual farmers, or when this occurrence affected taxation value. In all, the mantal is meant to reflect the potential value of a farm, which thus clearly depended on difficult to measure factors such as the effectiveness of the farmer and fluctuating land prices. Långasjö local historical and folk societies use the mantal system when describing farm sizes in published studies, which

⁶ Rosén, *Himlajord och handelsvara*, 55.

⁷ Nils Wahlin, *Bondeklassens undergrävande. Emigrationsutredningen bilaga X*, (Stockholm, 1911), 37.

⁸ Magnus Perlestam, *Den rotfaste bonden - myt eller verklighet?: brukaransvar i Ramkvilla socken 1620-1820* (Lund, 1998), 177-178.

⁹ *Långasjö. Försök till en sockenbeskrivning*, 98 and 117. The lack of sawmills in the district, and lumber prices too low to warrant shipping of logs, contributed to delaying commercial logging in Långasjö. Thus, it was not until the 1930s that the forest industry started to be profitable for farmers.

suggests that the mantal continues to have great resonance in local imagination.¹⁰

Finally, the Church records invariably used the mantal system to describe farms, and noted eventual changes in mantal size due to farm divisions or amalgamations. In some cases, when parents subdivided property to allow married sons to farm independently without transferring ownership, it is difficult to discover either the taxation value or the total acreage of the divided properties. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the Church Records started to use legal property descriptions, which then did not imply any financial value on the land or the buildings. Even after this change, Långasjö Church Records commonly include the mantal description, but never the taxable value. For the purpose of this study, therefore, the mantal is the most practical way of creating social differentiating between farms.

¹⁰ For instance, *Långasjö. Försök till en sockenbeskrivning* never mention taxation value in connection with farms and *Gård och by i Långasjö* invariably uses the mantal system to discuss farms, although both hectare size and taxation value are included in the detailed description of the individual farms.

Appendix 3

Långasjö emigrantregister

A 3

Utvandrade familje-
medlemmar se aktnr

A 1

A 2

I konvolut förvaras: foto , intervju , brev , övrigt A b r a h a m s s o n Sven Johan August

Född den 16/4 1852 i Långasjö

Föräldrar Carl Abrahamsson, Berta Abrahamsdotter

Faderns yrke Hemmansägare

Antal syskon, emigranter inräknad 6 (därav emigranter 1) (5 födda i Amerika)

Emigrantens yrke före utvandringen

Bosatt i Långasjö Ög.

Flyttningens betyg utfärdat den 1853

Ålder vid emigrationen

1

Utrest från den med

Bestämmelseort i Amerika

Bosättnings- (uppehålls-) ort(er) i Amerika ~~Francenia Chisago County, Minn. ; flyttade 1882 28/8 till Groton i Dakota. Pick där sammolikt homestead. Utom farm hade han saloon.~~Sysselsättning *Förvärdad med brodern Johan August, född den 12/7 1854 i Chisago*

Gift år med

Barn

Kyrklig samhörighet *7 tillhörde Chis. Lake Ch intill 1852.*

Föreningsarbete

Besökt Långasjö

Återvände hem år

Antal år i Amerika

Sysselsättning efter hemkomsten

Bosättningsort »

Död år

1853 ombord på båten Franklin King

Appendix 4

British Columbia population according to ethnicity, 1921 and 1931.

| 1921 | | 1931 | |
|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Total population | 524 582 | Total population | 694 263 |
| British | 387 503 | British | 489 923 |
| Chinese | 38 539 | Chinese | 27 139 |
| Indian | 22 377 | Scandinavian** | 33 854 |
| Scandinavian* | 19 002 | Indian | 24 599 |
| French | 11 246 | Japanese | 22 205 |
| Japanese | 9 863 | German | 16 986 |
| Italian | 8 587 | French | 15 028 |
| Russian | 7 373 | Italian | 12 254 |
| German | 7 273 | Russian | 10 398 |
| Finnish | 3 112 | Finnish | 6 858 |
| Austrian | 2 993 | Polish | 4 599 |
| Hebrew | 1 696 | Austrian | 3 891 |
| Polish | 1 361 | Hebrew | 2 743 |
| Belgian | 1 324 | Ukrainian | 2 583 |
| Ukrainian | 793 | Belgian | 1 597 |
| Negro | 676 | Negro | 533 |
| Unspecified | 6 497 | Unspecified | 17 462 |

Source: Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Table 26, Population classified according to principal origins of the people by counties of census divisions, 1921; and Census of Canada, Vol. 2, Table 31, Population classified according to sex and racial origins by provinces, 1931.

* "Scandinavian" is compiled from Swedish (9 666), Norwegian (6 570), Danish (2 191), and Icelandic (575).

** "Scandinavian" is compiled from Swedish (16 108), Norwegian (12 943), Danish (3 945), and Icelandic (858).

Appendix 5a

Occupation in British Columbia, Based on Father's occupation: Farmer

| Farm sons: Group 1 | | Farm sons: Group 2 | |
|--------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| <i>Total</i> | 41 | <i>Total</i> | 99 |
| From US | 4 | From US | 3 |
| From Other Canada | 0 | From Other Canada | 2 |
| 2nd occupation | 13 | 2nd occupation | 36 |
| 3rd occupation | 3 | 3rd occupation | 12 |
| 4th occupation | 0 | 4th occupation | 2 |
| 5th occupation | 0 | 5th occupation | 1 |
| Foreman rail | 7 | Foreman rail | 20 |
| Track master | 0 | Track master | 4 |
| Foreman other | 1 | Foreman other | 2 |
| Self employed | 1 | Self employed | 7 |
| Farmer | 4 | Farmer | 8 |
| Left BC for US | 10 | Left BC for US | 25 |

| Farmsons: Group 3 | | Farmsons: Group 4 | |
|-------------------|----|-------------------|---|
| <i>Total</i> | 27 | <i>Total</i> | 8 |
| From US | 2 | From US | 0 |
| From Other Canada | 1 | From Other Canada | 0 |
| 2nd occupation | 8 | 2nd occupation | 2 |
| 3rd occupation | 5 | 3rd occupation | 0 |
| 4th occupation | 2 | 4th occupation | 0 |
| 5th occupation | 1 | 5th occupation | 0 |
| Foreman rail | 9 | Foreman rail | 2 |
| Trackmaster | 1 | Trackmaster | 0 |
| Foreman other | 1 | Foreman other | 0 |
| Selfemployed | 7 | Selfemployed | 1 |
| Farmer | 4 | Farmer | 0 |
| Left BC for US | 5 | Left BC for US | 0 |

Appendix 5b

Based on father's occupation: Farm renter, Crofter, Tradesman, Labourer, Soldier and Other

| Father occ: Farm rent | | Father occ: crofter | | Father occ: Tradesman | |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|
| <i>Total</i> | 9 | <i>Total</i> | 21 | <i>Total</i> | 18 |
| From US | 0 | From US | 1 | From US | 0 |
| From Other Canada | 1 | From Other Canada | 0 | From Other Canada | 0 |
| 2nd occupation | 2 | 2nd occupation | 4 | 2nd occupation | 4 |
| 3 rd occupation | 0 | 3rd occupation | 0 | 3rd occupation | 2 |
| 4 th occupation | 0 | 4th occupation | 0 | 4th occupation | 1 |
| 5 th occupation | 0 | 5th occupation | 0 | 5th occupation | 0 |
| Foreman rail | 5 | Foreman rail | 12 | Foreman rail | 5 |
| Track master | 0 | Track master | 1 | Track master | 0 |
| Foreman other | 0 | Foreman other | 0 | Foreman other | 0 |
| Self employed | 0 | Self employed | 1 | Self employed | 1 |
| Farmer | 0 | Farmer | 2 | Farmer | 0 |
| Left BC for US | 1 | Left BC for US | 1 | Left BC for US | 5 |

| Father occ: Labourer | | Father occ: Soldier | | Parent occ: Other | |
|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| <i>Total</i> | 24 | <i>Total</i> | 20 | <i>Total</i> | 25 |
| From US | 0 | From US | 2 | From US | 2 |
| From Other Canada | 0 | From Other Canada | 1 | From Other Canada | 1 |
| 2nd occupation | 11 | 2nd occupation | 5 | 2nd occupation | 8 |
| 3rd occupation | 4 | 3rd occupation | 1 | 3rd occupation | 3 |
| 4th occupation | 0 | 4th occupation | 0 | 4th occupation | 2 |
| 5th occupation | 0 | 5th occupation | 0 | 5th occupation | 0 |
| Foreman rail | 5 | Foreman rail | 9 | Foreman rail | 6 |
| Track master | 1 | Track master | 0 | Track master | 0 |
| Foreman other | 0 | Foreman other | 0 | Foreman other | 0 |
| Self employed | 0 | Self employed | 0 | Self employed | 2 |
| Farmer | 1 | Farmer | 0 | Farmer | 2 |
| Left BC for US | 2 | Left BC for US | 5 | Left BC for US | 4 |

Appendix 6

Långasjö Remigrants from British Columbia to Sweden (excluding those who went from BC to USA to Sweden)

| | Total | Occupation BC | | | | | Occupation Sweden | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| | | Labourer | Foreman | Craftsman | Self emp | Other | Farmer | Craftsman | Labourer | Other | |
| Remigrants | 96 | 56 | 28 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 60 | 11 | 9 | 16 | |
| Group 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Group 2 | 34 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 22 | 4 | 2 | 6 | |
| Group 3 | 13 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 2 | |
| Group 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Rent/Croft/Soldier | 15 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Tradesman | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Labourer/Indigent | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | |
| Other | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |

| | Total married | Married (Occupation post-migration) | | | | Single (Occupation post-migration) | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Farmer | Craftsman | Labourer | Other | Total Single | Farmer | Craftsman | Labourer |
| Remigrants | 77 | 55 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 5 | 2 | 8 |
| Group 1 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Group 2 | 26 | 19 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Group 3 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Group 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Farm Rent + Crofter | 11 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Tradesman | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Labourer/Other | 8 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Appendix 8

List of Svea members, occupation in Sweden and in British Columbia

| Last Name | First Name | born | Country | Region | YearImmigr | Occ Sweden | Occ BC |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Brobeck | Eric | 1858 | Sweden | Vänersborg | 1883 | architect | Civil Engineer |
| Lindgren | Sven Herbert | 37 | Sweden | Z | 1923 | Baker son | Logger |
| Seaholm | Sven | 1912 | Sweden | Matfors Värmland | 1929 | Blacksmith (app.) | Carpenter |
| Hagberg | Carl (Bror) | 1899 | Sweden | Jämtland | 1923 | Caretaker | Carpenter |
| Lidner | Per Jonas | 1887 | Sweden | Jämtland | 1913 | Carpenter | Carpenter |
| Holmberg | Hugo | 1891 | n/a | n/a | n/a | Carpenter | Carpenter |
| Peterson | Carl Hjalmar | 1878 | Sweden | Stockholm | 1890 | child | Electrician |
| Johnson | Carl Axel | 1873 | Sweden | Göteborg | 1900-11-05 | chimney sweeper | Waiter |
| Loving (Löfving) | Mauritz | 1899 | Sweden | Dalarna | 1924 | Electric fitter | Labourer |
| | | | | | | | |
| Diffner | Hans Johan | 1885 | Sweden | Orsa | 1907 | ex. Enlist. Soldier | Notory; Builder |
| Anderson | Richard | 1890 | Sweden | Östergötland | 1910 | Farmer | Labourer |
| Rudman | Sven Ivar | 1908 | Sweden | Stora Tuna | 1927 | Farmer | Labourer |
| Flodberg | Gustaf Per | 37 (1909?) | Sweden | Dalarna | 1928 | Farmer | Tailor |
| Anderson | Carl | 1895 | Sweden | Östergötland | 1927 | Farmer | Miner |
| Ericson | Thorsten | 1906 | Sweden | Dalarna | 1929 | Farmhand | Carpenter |
| Anderson | Anders Barth. | 1902 | Sweden | Göteborg | 1927 | Farmhand | Labourer |
| Anderson | Georg | 1909 | Sweden | Jönköping | 1928 | Farmhand | Floorlayer |
| Peterson | Sven | 1900 | Sweden | Västerbotten | 1922-08-12 | Farmhand | Floorlayer |
| Peterson | John | 1903 | Sweden | Jönköping | 1925 | Farmhand | Logger |
| Eld | Karl Axel | 1908 | Sweden | Falun | 1928-03-30 | Farmhand | Logger |
| Rosell | John | 1900 | Sweden | Norrbotten | 1922-08-17 | Farmhand | Logger |
| Svenson | B. | 1888 | Sweden | Västernorrland | 1927 | Farmhand | Baker |
| Carlson | Ivar | 1909 | Sweden | Häkmark | 1927-06-11 | Farmhand | Labourer |
| Anderson | Axel | 1894 | Sweden | Östergötland | n/a (1914) | Farmhand | Carpenter |
| Carlson | M | 1901 | Sweden | Morjärv | 1923 | Farm hand | Carpenter |
| Borgeson | Axel Levim | 1904 | Sweden | Västra Götaland | 1926 | Farmhand | Painter |
| Carlson | Albin | 1896 | Sweden | Långasjö | 1914-02-27 | Farmhand | Labourer |
| Bernflyckt | Simon | 1902 | Sweden | Holm län P | 1926 | Farmhand | Blacksmith |
| Sivertson | Kjell Anselm | 35 (1912) | Sweden | Klöversjö | 1928 | Farmhand | Contractor |

| Last Name | First Name | born | Country | Region | YearImmigr | Occ Sweden | Occ BC |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Pearson | Gust H. | 1907 | Sweden | Kalmar | 1926 | Farmhand | Painter |
| Bloom | John | 39 | Sweden | Hälsingland | 1917 | Farmhand | Labourer |
| Lindström | Chas | 1885 | Sweden | | 1902 | Farmhand | Logger |
| Erickson | William | 1909 | Sweden | Gävle X | 1927 | Farm son | Carpenter |
| Helgeson | Nels | 1882 | Sweden | Halland | 1906 03 03 | Farm son | Logger |
| Sandbäck | Oscar | 1887 | Sweden | Kalix | 1907 | Farm son | Logger |
| Franson | O. | 1895 | Sweden | (Kronoberg) | 1913 | Farm son | Formsetter |
| Swanson | Justus | 1872 | Sweden | Göteborg | 1891-04-08 | Farm son | Hotel Keeper |
| Hedlund | Fred | 1884 | Sweden | | 1903 | Farm son | Waiter |
| Erikson | N.E. | 1870 | Sweden | Sunne, Värmland | 1888 | Farm son | Logger |
| Helgeson | Lars | 1887 | Sweden | Jämtland | 1907 | Farm son | Tailor |
| Hellman | Frank | 1890 | Sweden | (Jämtland) | 1910 | Farm son | Logger |
| Seaholm | Axel B. | 1906 | Sweden | | 1923 | Farm son | Painter |
| Johnson | Albin | 47 | Sweden | Nysätra | 1927 | Farm son | Carpenter |
| Gustafson | Otto | 1887 | Sweden | Närke | 1908 (1907) | Farm son | Labourer |
| Dahlgren | Nels | 1889 | Sweden | Västerbotten | 1909 | Farm son | Floorlayer |
| Carlson | Carl Albin | 35 (1910) | Sweden | Boden (Övertuleå) | 1929 | Farm son | plasterer |
| Vri(e?)tman | Char(Karl August) | 1886 | Sweden | Vintrosa | 1911 | Farm son | Miner |
| Nordell | Johan | 1895 | USA | Västerbotten | 1913 | Farm son | Millwright |
| (Väst)lund? | A.H. | 1892 | Sweden | | 1911 | Farm son | Painter |
| Johnson | Peter | 1881 | Sweden | Värmland | 1904 | Farm son | Bridge man |
| Olson | Birger | 1900 | Sweden | Värmland | 1929-03-09 | Fisherman | Sawmill worker |
| Edenholm | Richard | 1887 | Sweden | Kalmar Län | 1907 | foster son | Logger |
| Anderson | Ernst | 1884 | Sweden | | 1901 | Foundry worker | Labourer |
| Hammarström | Eric John | 35 | Sweden | Härjedalen | 1923 | home son | Floor layer |
| Fahlen | John (Jon Sigurd) | 1908 10/1 | Sweden | Vemdalen | 1928 | Home son | Engineer |
| Blomqvist | Claus Olof A. | 1886 | Sweden | Långasjö | 1906 | home son | Carpenter |
| Lindahl | Sanfrid | 1900 | Sweden | Malmberget | n/a | kusk | Labourer |
| Nordin | Eric | 1877 | Sweden | Ärsta Kyrkdal (Y) | 1903 | Labourer | Misc (Labour?) |
| Lanström | Alfred | 1876 | Sweden | Värmland | 1892 | Labourer | CPR Foreman |
| Paulson (Pålson) | Peter August | 1872 | Sweden | Lomma | 1891 | Labourer | Bartender |
| Peterson | Elwin | 1889 | Sweden | Undersåker | 1908 | labourer | Floor layer |
| Hedborg | Alf | 1903 | Sweden | Stockholm | 1928 | Labourer | Cement man |

| Last Name | First Name | born | Country | Region | YearImmigr | Occ Sweden | Occ BC |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Lindmark | Axel Antonius | 1900 | Sweden | Skellefteå | 1923 | Labourer | Machinist |
| Granberg | Jonas Sivert | 1882 | Sweden | Piteå | 1905 06 02 | Labourer | Labourer |
| Carlson | Swan | 1895 | Sweden | Malmberget | 1923? | labourer | Woodworker |
| Larson | Wilhelm | 1866 | Sweden | Söderhamn | 1902 03-28 | Labourer | Carpenter |
| Lindgren | Arnold | 1903 | Sweden | Vagsele | 1927 | Labourer | Labourer |
| Johnson | Gustav A.W. | 1886 | Sweden | | 1903 | Labourer | Marine |
| Johansson | Robert | 1886 | Sweden | | 1909 | Labourer | Carpenter |
| Molander | August E | 1879 | Sweden | Värmland | 1903 | Labourer | Carpenter |
| Petterson | Erik Einar | 1892 | Sweden | Kalmar Län | 1910-11-11 | Labourer | Labourer |
| Lund | Edward | 1882 | Sweden | Gävleborg | 1902-04-13 | Labourer son | Plasterer |
| Johnson | Emil | 1897 | Sweden | Dalarna | 1924 | Lbr-arb | Labourer |
| Erickson | Axel Edvin | 1902 | Sweden | Transtrand Dalarna | 1924 | logger | Welder |
| Backlund | Harald | 1886 | Sweden | Vemdalen | 1910 | logger (obefintl. 1910) | Carpenter |
| Gustafson | Carl Hjalmar | 1883 | Sweden | Söderhamn | 1892 (1902?) | Lumber yard work | Carpenter |
| Person | Carl | 1882 | Sweden | Malmö | 1909 | Machinist | Track Foreman |
| Rohm | K | 1897 | Sweden | Jämtland | 1923 | miller | Logger |
| Carlson | Holger | 1901 | Sweden | Malmberget | 1923 | miner | Labourer |
| Högberg | Erik Vilhelm | 1888 | Sweden | Söderhamn | 1908 | painter | Painter |
| Lindberg | Harry | 1902 | Sweden | Skåne | 1924 | rättare | Carpenter |
| Johnson | Swan | 1905 | Sweden | Härjedalen | 1923 | sawmill worker | sawer (sågare) |
| Gustafson | Eric | 1905 | Sweden | Kalmar | 1923-07-28 | signpainter | Sawmill worker |
| Graff | Eric | 1884 | Sweden | Östersund | 1910 | smidesarbetare | logger |
| Anderson | Arvid | 45 (1893) | Sweden | Stockholm | 1923 | Stoker (Eldare) | Carpenter |
| Lundin | Nels Hugo | 1902 | Sweden | Örebro | 1926 | Store clerk | Sawmill worker |
| Johnson | John | 1867 | Sweden | Småland | 1898 | store owner | Labourer |

Appendix 9a

Scandinavians Employed by Elk River Timber, 1936

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Faller and Bucker:</i> | E. Anderson, J. Anderson, Adolphson, Arneson, Asselin, Bogren, Ekstrm, Erickson, Gonkson, Graver, Genhzon (Jönsson?), Hanson, K. Hillgren, O. Hillgren, K. Holmstrom, O. Holmstrom, Laja, Lindberg, Nelson, Nyquist, O. Olson, R. Olson, A. Olson, Stilin, Storback, Turgyn, Lapping, (27 names) |
| <i>Bullbucker:</i> | Holmstrom |
| <i>Flunky:</i> | Johnson, Petrie |
| <i>Rockman:</i> | Larson, Larson, Larson, Olson, Quarnström |
| <i>Axeman:</i> | Larson, Stridman, Anderson |
| <i>Baker:</i> | Anderson |
| <i>Filer:</i> | Carlson, Hallgren, Nylund, Anderson |
| <i>Powdermen:</i> | Carlson |
| <i>Rock Hammer Man:</i> | Carlson, Carlson, Johanson |
| <i>2nd Rigger:</i> | Johnson |
| <i>Rockforeman:</i> | Dahl |
| <i>Hd. Loader:</i> | Holm |
| <i>Chokerman:</i> | Easlow (Åslöv?), Runn (Rönn?), Stefanssen, Tindeland, Hege, Gran, Stefansson, Tindeland |
| <i>Hook Tender:</i> | Solver |
| <i>Bar repairer:</i> | Siverson |
| <i>Rockdriller:</i> | Eklund |

Appendix 9a, cont.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Grader:</i> | Antonson, Anderson, Antonson, Skasko |
| <i>Bull cook:</i> | Sol |
| <i>Steel Forman:</i> | Beck |
| <i>Steelgang:</i> | Larson, Gahn [Gran?] |
| <i>Steelsharpener:</i> | Hagren |
| <i>Air Compressor:</i> | Pearson [Pärson?] |
| <i>Boom Man:</i> | Lillburn, Peterson, Peterson, Peterson |
| <i>Signals:</i> | Peterson, Peterson, Wickström, Johnson, Brosstrom |
| <i>Riggslinger:</i> | Peterson, Anderson |
| <i>Survey assistant:</i> | Berg |
| <i>Chaser:</i> | Olson, Granlund |

Appendix 9b

Scandinavians Employed by Elk River Timber, 1940

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Faller and Bucker</i> | C. Anderson, E. Anderson, Asselin, Arneson, Bornstrom, Bystrom, E. Carlson, W. Carlson, Carlson, Carlson, Dahlberg, Enquist, A. Erickson, Eric Erickson, Ed Erickson, Finnell, Flink, Fransen, Granholm, Gulbranson, Gonhson (Jönson?), Hanson, Hassell, Hjeldnes, Holman, Kalin, F. Larson, O. Larson, R. Lindberg, Lindell, Loken, Matson, Nelson, Nordlander, Nyman, Swanberg, Westerlund, Wetlin, Westman, Witzen, Zakrison, Ofstedal, J. Olson, R. Olson, Ostrom, Paulin, E. Peterson, J. Peterson, N. Peterson, Ronnback, Sandgren, Sederberg, Selin, Skog, Smedman, Steen (56 names) |
| <i>Bullbucker</i> | Holmstrom |
| <i>High Rigger</i> | Gabrielson |
| <i>Axeman</i> | Anderson, Jordt, Stridman, |
| <i>Filer</i> | Anderson, Carlson, Erickson, Pearson, Sivertson |
| <i>Chokerman</i> | Anderson, Janzen, Janzen, Linfors, Nobert, Sigurdson, Sivertson |
| <i>Hook Tender</i> | Belin, Granlund, Strand, Orness, Peterson |
| <i>Hd. Loader</i> | Vidman |
| <i>2nd Loader</i> | Backman, Billström, Bjors, Matson, Land, Peterson |
| <i>Boom Man</i> | Alfredson, Hanson, Kronseth, Peterson, Peterson |
| <i>Signals</i> | Dahl, Lindahl, Nygard, |
| <i>Riggslinger</i> | Backman |
| <i>Chaser</i> | Peterson, Nelson |
| <i>Cook</i> | Erickson, Osen, Osen, Sol (bull cook) |
| <i>Flunky</i> | Antonson, Olson, Ongman, Paulson |

Appendix 9b, cont.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Baker</i> | Sandstrom |
| <i>Sectionman</i> | Anderson |
| <i>Transitman</i> | Skaugstad |
| <i>Trackforeman</i> | Beck |
| <i>2nd Brakeman</i> | Erickson, Olson |
| <i>Loco Engineer</i> | Henderson , Petri |
| <i>Laborer</i> | Hendrikson |
| <i>Firepatrol</i> | Berg |
| <i>Engineer</i> | Matson, Olson |
| <i>Pumpman</i> | Rorman |
| <i>Shovel operator</i> | Rosenlof |
| <i>Piledrive foreman</i> | Siverson |
| <i>Office</i> | Greig |

Appendix 10a

Non-Scandinavian Fallers, Buckers and Chokermen Employed by Elk River Timber, 1936

Fallers and Buckers:

Andler, Andrusuk, Antoniuk, Backas, Barlik, Beudel, Beenan, Bissonette, Bognar, Borwikoff, Boyk, Bozik, Bruce, Burreughs, Bruton, Campbell, Connors, Corey, Cousineau, Dobruk, Dokuchuk, Filinsky, Gates, Gibilou, Giroux, Gladiuk, Grisuk, Gatzenko, Hall, Hardinor, Hawriluk, Hilden, Holland, Holowatiuk, Horvath, Horvath, Ivanich, Joksich, Kalinj, Kapusta, Karpinsky, Kirilenko, Klakovich, Kliskau, Kostuk, Krumin, Kruzik, Kubus, Kuceral, Kuzmicky, Laberge, Lachmay, Lasek, Liskevich, Lowe, Ludkiewiez, G. McDonald, H. McDonald, McKenzie, Madera, Maniarich, Maraw, Marchen, Marinuk, Marks, Mataya, H. Mater, J. Mater, Malkovich, Matkovich, Magurik, Miller, Milosevich, Mation, Oeuvray, Ozol, Patrick, Pavicich, Pequirra, Perusich, G. Plese, N. Plese, Plisick, Podwysocki, Porchuny, Putick, Radoscvich, Ragnovick, Rodeski, Rodrique, Rossignal, Roy, Saarikko, Siduk, Simser, Sklaruk, Smelks, Smith, Sololoff, Solouruko, Staceuricz, Stauovich, G. Starcevich, S. Starcevich, Stefanovich, Tape, Thibeux, Tijan, Trlan, Trupensky, Urban, Wagacheff, Wasileck, Williams, Wilson, Woiten, Wolfe, Wolsuk, Zalesky, Zwolen.

(120 names)

Chokermen:

H. J. McDonald, McIrvin, McLeod, Madden, Mitten, Moffatt, Moropito, Murray, Mahorney, Nedean, Olesiejuk, Pearce, Potter, Quass, Richardson, Robinson, I. Rockwell, M. Rockwell, Serkas, Sestal, A. Simser, B. Simser, Stasiuk, Symington, G. Thompson, A. Thompson, Uszko, Vogt, Wachter, Wainwright, White, T. Wood, A. Woods, Zoscock, Baun, Brosseau, Gregory, Gregg, Holliday, J. Hughes, L. Hughes, Irwin, Jawerski, Kangas, Kenda, Knechtle, Koldun, Kybicz, Larnie, Buchanan, S. Carter, W. Carter, Chomak, Clare, Cochrane, Deacon, Derby, Evans, Farina, Finnerty, Finnie, Fourest, Galliazzo, Germyn, Bazylevich, O. Benton, R. Benton, Boulton, Bratt, Zyblut.

(70 names)

Appendix 10b

Non-Scandinavian Fallers and Buckers, 1940

Ambrose, Andler, Anuroff, Asuma, Badak, Barber, S. Bebko, M. Bebko, Bissonette, Bognar, Bolderoff, Bowman, Bozik, Brisky, Brkljacich, Bruce, Buncich, Caron, Chester, Chomak, Chomor, Davis, J. Dobruk, S. Dobruk, Dorosow, doyon, Dragicevie, Drozda, Dublick, Edgley, Faucsalczki, Foldi, Gavryk, Giroux, Gracan, Grohment, Hawriluk, Haysak, Hetherington, Horachuk, E. Horvath, J Horvath, Hreben, Jarimus, John Kangas, J. J. Kangans, Kebe, Kirilenko, Kiselevich, Konyha, Koskinen, Kowal, Kozol, Kralich, Kravena, Krpan, Kula, Kuzmicky, A. Labelle, B. Labelle, Laferriere, C. Lafleur, E. Lafleur, Leno, Liskevich, Ludkiewicz, Lukas, Luoma, McIntyre, J. Mackie, W. Mackie, Maikkola, Mainarich, Malatinka, H. Mater, J. Mater, Maunus, Medvedeff, Michlicic, Mikla, Misky, Molnar, Montgomery, Movin Munck, Mahoney, Narancich, Nation, Necemer, Nesteruk, Nikitenko, Oeuvray, Stipac, Strilkowsky, Sutor, Tahala, Thomas, Tomasunas, Trtan, Trupensky, Vachon, Valko, Vukonich, Wakulahik, Wolsuk, J. Wasyluk, A. Wasyluk, Witala, Woiten, Wowchuk, Yatzenko, Yuranich, Yurkin, Zack, Zagyva, Zalesky, Zarazun, Zarin, Zubal, Oliferuk, Ozanich, Ozal, Pavich, Pavich, Pavicish, M. Pavicich, T. Pavicich, Plese, Plosila, D. Podorowsky, A. Podorowsky, Power, J. Radosevich, V. Radosevich, W. Radosevich, J. Rantala, T. Perusich, Piironen, Rodeski, Roderique, Rubcic, Saarikko, Schmidt, Sertich, Silich, Sitay, Skender, Skolozdra, Smith, Solonenko, Stajcer, G. Stanfel, J. Stanfel, Stanovich. **(154 names)**

Appendix 11

Swedish language transcript of letters from Martin Johansson, Per Nilsson, Johan Hedin, Ingeborg Holmsta, and Karl Solem.

Page 142: Martin Johansson to Bernhard Johansson [Grandfather], 9 January 1929.

Ja, nog är det skillnad på Sverige å "Tieska" Columbia alltid. Kunde en få något annat jobb så skulle man gå strax, ty hårdare arbete finns inte på Guds svarta jord. . . . Sådan skog som denna har inte någon skådat. Idag har jag visserligen huggit 20 ties, men jag har slitit värre än jag någonsin har gjort i Sverige, å ändå inte dragit ihop dom "dj-na". Ursäkta mig!!

Page 143: Martin Johansson to Lydia Johansson [Mother], 1 May 1929.

Det fins nog arbete i skogen här å på Vancouverön, men det är jätteträn som är så stora i omkrets som köket hemma i Harvered en del. Å det är livsfarliga arbeten derute. Alla bra betalda grovarbeten här är livsfarliga.

Page 143: Martin Johansson to Lydia Johansson [Mother], 10 November 1929.

Nu ska jag beskriva julhelgen. Vi kom till en camp 17 mil från järnvägen. Gamla skäggiga gubbar, övervägande fransmän å en å annan svensk ingen tillstymmelse till någon jul, de lågo i sina gamla sängar å stirra i taket som tukthusfångar. Så ringer matklockan. Vi storma till mathuset med liten förhoppning att åtminstone få lite bättre mat julafton. Nej tack, sämre mat än jag fick der får man leta efter. Potatis som stått kokande så länge att de var sura, kött så segt att mina dåliga tänder inte kunde tugga det, lite xxxxx till efterrätt å så var det till att sitta å titta på gamla sura kläder å gubbar å känna lukten av skit å blöta kläder å hästluk till det var tid att gå å lägga sig.

Page 218: Per Nilsson to Märta Sundström, 10 August 1902

också är klädtvätt och strykning här ganska dyr, du kunde tjäna ganska mycket med det om du finge vara frisk . .

Page 218: Per Nilsson to Märta Sundström, 28 September 1902.

Och säg så lättsamt som fruntimren har det her och kunna även förtjena bra ..

Page 246: Martin Johansson to Folke Johansson [brother], 15 Mars, 1930.

Jag å en dalslänning skoja ju lite med 2 kaféjäntor i Proctor sist jag var nere, å de var ju eller såg ju, ordentliga ut. Här är ju många ordentliga fruntimmer här, naturligtvis, men vad en emigrant får det kan du räkna ut. I synnerhet när man inte är känd på någon plats, å skall ligga i ödemarken månadslångt. Det är en hård prövning man får å hade jag vetat vad jag nu vet så inte hade jag farit till Canada, nej hellre då till Sibirien.

Page 246: Martin Johansson to Folke Johansson, 14 oktober, 1928.

Jag råder dig inte att komma hit, nej stanna där du är. Det är ett fördömt land detta här. Allting är dyrt, å endast arbete å arbete inga nöjen. Ja, nu får jag inte se ett fruntimmer på hela vintern här uppe. Vi ligger inne i skogen 1 svensk mil från station å der nere är inte mer än 2-3 hus å bara ungar tror jag . . . Jag kan inte fatta det, gamla svenskar som inte har varit hemma på 15-30 år,

å som leva sin mesta tid i skogen. Men det är så att när de slutat ett jobb så gå de till en stad å super upp pengarna . . . Ja en del är ju gifta å har familj förstås å de har ju något att arbeta för. Inte trodde jag att Canada var ett så tomt å intresselöst land, tänk vilket liv, ligga i en koja i skogen hela vintern å inte så mycke som en kvinnlig kock.

Page 247-248: Martin Johansson to Folke Johansson, 15 Mars, 1930.

Är ni friska alla å har du någon fjälla eller har du inte. Hur är det nu med fjällorna som jag svärma för för ett par å sedan. Är de gifta å lyckliga eller flacka de ikring å krossa hjärtan än. Är Elsa å Gunnar ihop än, arbetar Elsa i Gislaved än. Hildur i Ambjörnarp som jag var smått kär i, arbetar hon i Gislaved också å vem friar hon till. Å Ruth A., Ingrid H., Margit C. å alla de andra käcka jäntorna som man blev kär i den ena kvällen å inte den andra, var är de nu. Hälsa dem från mej. . . Jag satt å titta på ett kort av Ambjörnarpa töserna å titta mest på Hildur. Hälsa henne att om hon är ledig så kommer jag hem och friar till henne. Be henne skriva till mig. . . . Har du kort på eder så sänd något lika så på jäntor om du kan få tag i. Här är tävlan om vem som har de vackraste kort på fruntimmer å kortet jag har på Ambjörnarpa töserna tror jag tar första pris.

Page 248: Martin Johansson to Folke Johansson, 22 June 1930.

Hoppas du skriver snart, väntar brev dagligen. . . . Skriv om nöjen ni har å vad fruntimmer du strålar med, hur har de gamla fjällorna det, de är väl gifta å lyckliga, med barn å sådant nu. Är Elsa i Gislaved än eller arbeta de på fabriken, töserna å Torsten. Tänk om man kunde få komma hem å få arbete der, de vet inte hur gott de ha.

Page 248: Per Nilsson to Märta Sundström [undated, but likely October 1902].

Nu får jag föra Hedins talan till dig en stund han frågar dig om du vet om Lina Sundström är gift och om Emma Svenson har någon fästman nu för tiden. Också säger han att du järna får skaffa honom en fästmö men han vill höra vem du helst har tänkt utvälja till hans blivande. Ock i öfrigt vill han have litet reda hur det är med flickorna dernere.

Page 248: Johan Hedin to Märta Sundström, [undated].

Hur är det med Emelie har hon någon festman, hälsa henne från mig, det skule vara roligt att någon gång höra något från henne ner du skrifver till Per kan du nemna lite hur det är med flickorna roligt få höra hur de mår.

Page 249: Ingeborg Holmsta to Mrs Sundström [Märta's mother] and Märta Sundström, 28 maj, [No year, but likely 1904.]

ja nog for man arbeta her og så men det er battre betalt från 8 til 4 har jag en doller jag har 5 plaser at vaska og att vyka [work?] pa men du skal få höre at jag har nog hat manga at försörje ensam, Karl og Pit kom her til Vinnipeg i början af af april. Pit bode en manne her med as han hade ei en sent at betala matten men det som han hade söp han op på 3 dager Karl var litte bater han [?] i Larsons han hade lette kvar der at leva på men du for ei seya noget om hur uselt et liv her er det er sym om alle som ei har nogen om sig papa seyer at han lever som i et paradys nu i motsas til för en dag har han varit af di boeste vi hade en til som hette Tryge [?] från Östersund han er også mig Skyli 10 daler ...

Page 250: Ingeborg Homsta to "Sister" and "mother" [no names], 14 Februari, 1905

Kvarnström sitter mest på Skandia hotell Oskar Larsen spelar kort og Super ... Karl og Petter arbeetter tilsamens med papa, men Super op eftersom og ei nog dom super selv dom narar andre jag er glad jag er her Så papa har noget kvin og han seger selv det er aldeles for myket brendvin så det går ei det er en Styg årning og en dag seger dom som er her at pap varit en af di baste fast han selv latter ill men nu er han right glad. ... ja stakars Kjaringer som er kvar ... det er en tusen man som liger på et hotell di ljuder om varan tils dom er lika ala så åder di in på finkkan så for di betala 4 g 50 for en [?]

Page 250: Ingeborg Holmsta to Mrs Sundström and Märta Sundström, 28 maj, [no year, but likely 1904].

Karl er gåt til Britis Kolumbia til hösten skal han komma hit han sagde at han skule senda Mormor litte så fort han fik til noget. Du for ei sega noget om supningen varken nar du skriver eller komma men jag lamnar ei Kalle dinne penger utan dem sender jag i brev

Page 250-251: Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 13 July [no year, but likely 1902]

jag vil at du skal vara god og senda Detta Brev til Din Moder så hon for se at jag har det Bra jag vil at du skul koma ihog vad jag bad om at du skal vara God med Sige jag vil at du skal Sörja for min Bumlebok ijen nor jag for Det klart jag tenker at senda nu som för og litet mera og fortar jag sendar 30 Dolar den 2 Agus til Erik og Det som blir av det han skal ha det skal du sta i Boken min jag vil at Du skul siga til Erik at han tagar ut de 10 Kronor av jakob som jag har at fodra jag vil at ni ikke skal bara noget hat til mig jag vet jag jorde ikke ret sista Söndag jag var hema jag vil at Du skal svara så fort som du for Brev for det er nog roligt at få se og höra hur det er der hema for mig som liger så langt ine i Skogen

Page 251: Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 2 Februari, 1903:

Og så må jag omtala at det var et jubel nor det blev så at det blev farming va og så må jag omtala hur det er jo de som har taget jord skul på 100 Aker det vil siga 80 [?] os skal dem få jelp at byga og odla for det forsta for det skal ikke betalas noget for jorden jag skule bara havt mig någon Hustru sa har jag ikke varit noget bryd for at tagit lan jag må då siga at jag har det myket betre her en i Sveden jag eiker nog at trefa Dig en gang til om jag lever jag må då bedja Dig vara snel og omtal om det ir noget nyt der hema ... jag tika myke på min sige og Dig om det skule varit så at Du har fot gort selskap med den som skal fara hit i juni for Det er meningen at famelin til en og var skal få resa da jag må da fråga Dig om Du har lyst at koma til mig så må Du omtala for mig så skal jag betala for Dig vad det kostar for Dig og sige men ja må da siga Dig at det er myket betre her en i Sweden. Jag ja då siga Dig at Du ska svara mig på vat jag frågar jag tiker nog på eder for varje Dag må Du tro sa jag vet ikke vad jag skal jöra ...

Page 252: Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 19 april, 1903:

. . . men vil jag bedja Dig om at vara snil og se til at Sigge er ikke blir våt om Benen i vårvatnet.

Page 252, Footnote 163: Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 15 juli, 1903:

Din far [kan] taga og kjøpa et par skor til Sige tils han skal Björja Skolan av mina Pengar . . . för jag tenker på lilknorren for varje dag her ute for her kan man få se indianer som komer og flyter Det kan vara til 10 person som har flera hundra Hestar og her er det got om ormar av ala slag.

Page 252: Karl Solem to Märta Sundström, 3 December, 1903:

Jag må då beja Dig vara God og taga Reda på De pengar som jag sender jag sender 40 Dolar og av Den skal Du taga 5 kr til Dig 5 til Moder 5 til Sige og Det övriga vil jag at Du skal sita in i min Bok jag for vel betala Dig för Dina besvär sedan för jag komer nog til at senda litet for varje tid nu ... jag tinker på lile Sigur at han må få en drona at kjøpa på julgranen för utan de 5 ... jag skule vilat se hur ni stoker til Jul men jag er for langt Borta men Du må se om så ikke Sige fryser of föterna nar han gpr på skolan for om Du ikke har så du kan kjøpa Skor vad han behöver så vil jag at Du skal undereta mig Der om for jag vil han skal lida nogen nöd for vad jag har sagt det [heter ?] jag. [Troligast menas som "vad jag har sagt det *står jag för*."]]