Mr. Harvey Johnson
writer & historian

Thanks, London, for sharing this interesting information with me.

Rics Hartmey
THE SWEDISH COAT OF ARMS
A HOUSE FULL OF SWEDES

FATHER: John Peter Johnson (1851-1938) known as John B. Johnson
Married: 8-19-1875 to Clara Wilhelminia Olson (1855-1878)
Children: Helen Sophia (1876-1975); Anna (1877-1878)

MOTHER: Augusta Johanna Olson (1862-1948)
Married: 1-23-1879

CHILDREN:
- Martin (1880-2 days) Adair, CO near Orient, Iowa
- Bertha May (1881-1895) Adair, CO near Orient, Iowa
- Elmer (1883-1972) Adair, CO near Orient, Iowa
- Frank (1885-1977) Adair, CO near Orient, Iowa
- John Wesley (1888-1944) Fillmore, CO near Shickley, Neb.
- Clarence (1891) Jaqua, Kansas
- Edwin (1893) Jaqua, Kansas
- Harvey (1895) Jaqua, Kansas
- Mary (1897) Jaqua, Kansas
- Nettie (1899) Jaqua, Kansas
- Ralph (1900-1922) Jaqua, Kansas
- Veda Augusta (1902-1 month) Ault, Colorado
- Viola Johanna (1903) Fort Collins, Colorado
- Ivan Tennessee (1905-1936) Fort Collins, Colorado
- Baby Girl (1906-3 days) Fort Collins, Colorado

The following story was written by Edna Johnson Hoover, granddaughter of John and Augusta Johnson, in honor of their 100th year since marriage in 1879.
This is a story of the John B. Johnson family--early pioneers who homesteaded in a sod house in Kansas and moved to Colorado in 1902. The story covers incidents recalled by their children and recorded here for the benefit of their grandchildren and following generations--who are gathering at Ft. Collins, Colorado, on August 3, 4 and 5, 1979, to celebrate a large reunion.

All of the twelve children became prominent citizens in their own right, of which their families are justly proud. It is not intended to give credit to any particular one without credit to all, since this becomes much too large a task to record at this time.
A HOUSE FULL OF SWEDES
(A true story about John B. Johnson's family)

A TYPICAL SOD HOUSE

John B. Johnson's family home near Jaqua, Kansas, was a typical sod house in the 1900's. The town of Jaqua was 16 miles from St. Francis. It was demolished by a cyclone in the early 1940's. Today there is only the stone basement of the church and a few other indications of other buildings. That is all. However, it is a pretty spot along the Republican River and it is a favorite spot for picnics.

The windmill that you see in the picture was very important. Windmills were considered as the "Sentinel of the Plains." The wooden tower was constructed right on the farm and hoisted into place with the help of neighbors. It furnished water for the home, the animals, and the large garden. Vegetables were used fresh from the garden in summer and mother canned a large quantity in glass jars for winter. They kept a flock of chickens for eggs and a cow or two for milk. Mother preserved extra eggs by putting them in layers of grain in the cool cellar beside the house. Parsnips, carrots and turnips were stored in pits dug beside the barn. Potatoes and turnips were available the whole year.

Father had worked in a butcher shop as a boy. He knew how to cure his own meat. He would preserve a whole side of beef or pork in salt and mother would make sausage. She would press out the lard and use it to make laundry soap. All of the children remember how often mother washed their clothes with her homemade soap. They were all kept neat and clean.

Father and the older boys constructed and built all of the buildings that you can see in the picture. They carried the rocks for the foundations from the river bed. If you look closely, you can see the cellar door beside the house. The children loved to play on that sliding door. One day Harvey got a long splinter in his derriere. Mother took him in the house, laid him on the table, and had quite a time getting it all out.

When it rained, mother would catch the soft water in the rain barrel. She would store it in the cool cellar. They also stored water from the well, but it was not as soft as the rain
water. The family needed water stored for the days when the wind did not blow enough to turn the wheel. When some of the neighbors were out of water, they would bring a container and come over. They knew the Johnson's were usually well supplied. Mother would invite them to stay for dinner or supper--which was the evening meal--and visit. All of the neighbors shared with one another in emergencies.

There were a lot of poor families that migrated from the middle west to Kansas in the 1890's. The land at that time was turned from a barren prairie to a land of humble sod homes and homestead farms.

EARLY FAMILY HISTORY

Our family history begins in Sweden on both father's and mother's sides.

ON FATHER'S SIDE . . .

Grandfather Peter Johnson was born in Hornsken, Sweden in 1820. He married Marie Stephenson when he was in his twenties. Their three oldest children were born in Sweden. The two older children died very young. The youngest was a boy named Swan Gustaf Johnson (1848). He was always known as Gus. He came from Sweden to Burlington, Iowa along with his mother, father and grandfather in 1849. They came with a group of emigrants from Sweden in a group of sailing boats. The journey took six weeks. After reaching America they proceeded through the St. Lawrence river and the Great Lakes to Chicago by boat. From there they journeyed by wagon to Burlington, Iowa.

After arriving in Burlington, Grandfather Johnson worked for 25¢ per day to get started. The family stayed in Burlington for three years. It was here that the twins, Oscar and John, were born. One was born on March 29th just before midnight; the other one, John, was born just a few minutes after midnight on March 30th.

From Burlington the family moved to Glendale, Iowa for one year. The log cabin they lived in is now preserved in a park at Fairfield, Iowa. Then, grandfather purchased a small farm near New Sweden, Iowa. They moved the following year. Here a little girl named Sophia was born and died. Grandmother Marie Johnson died at her birth on September 20, 1854. Both are buried in the Lutheran Cemetery in New Sweden, Iowa.

Grandfather Johnson was a good businessman. He was well known as a "horse trader." He would also buy hogs and cattle and drive them through the woods to market. When Gus and Oscar were old enough he took them with him, and he left John at home to look after the farm.
In these early days there were no daily livestock reports. People didn't know the market values as they do today. But grandfather was smarter than most. He knew how to buy low and sell high. That's why he was a good "horse trader." He made a lot of money. And for safe-keeping he put it in covered buckets and buried it in the woods about the farm.

John has told us that sometimes he forgot how much he had and wanted to recount it. So he would dig it up, take it into the house, and put it all out on the dining room table. After counting and recording, it would again be buried out in the woods.

Also, grandfather liked his liquor. John said there was always a jug sitting on the table. John didn't like to see his father drink at all. In fact he hated it. That's why he was always against liquor of any kind. He never wanted anything to do with a person who drank.

But grandfather was good to his three boys. He gave each one a farm when he reached 21.

Grandfather Johnson's second wife was Louise Gustafson. They were married in 1854. To this union were born six children: Swan born in 1855; Henry born in 1858; Olivia (Nelson) born in 1862; Frank born in 1864; Sophia died in infancy; and Eben died in his teens. After Eben's death, grandfather left Louise and their six children. She married a Mr. Lindblom and stayed on the farm until the children were grown. Then, they moved to Burlington and adopted a girl named Ida.

Grandfather's third wife was Mrs. Christene Joneson. They were married in 1871. Christene was Oscar's mother-in-law. To this union were born two children: Clara (Peterson) and Charlie. After Christene died, grandfather married for a fourth time. His fourth wife's name was Johanna. That's about all we know about her except that she was born in 1844 and died in 1935.

After grandfather married his fourth wife he purchased another farm near New Sweden, Iowa where they lived until he died in 1899. Grandfather was sick for quite a long time, and both Gus and Oscar went to New Sweden to help take care of him.

ON MOTHER'S SIDE . . .

Grandfather Samuel Olson was born in Nekin, Sweden in 1826. Nekin was in the province of Smaland in the northern part of Sweden where the land is rocky and the soil meager. The farming season was very short. Out of each year there was as much darkness and cold as there was daylight and warmth. The family was very poor and it was hard to make ends meet.

Grandfather Olson's first wife was Christina Anderson. To this union were born two children: Caroline died in infancy; and Matilda was born in 1853. When she was born, Christina died.

Grandfather Olson's second wife was Johanna Sophia Anderson (1836-1927). To this union were born ten children: six in Sweden and four in America.
Born in Sweden were: Clara Wilhelmina (1855-1978); Samuel Walfrid (1859); Augusta Johanna (1862-1948); Anders Albert (1864); John Fredrick (1866) and Sobrina Sophia (1867- died at sea).

In 1867 Grandfather Olson decided to go to America. He had heard about the wide stretches of wonderous country that was available. Before they started they were told to take their bedding, cooking utensils and food because there were no comforts aboard the ship for them. They packed and got ready for the trip. Grandma Olson's sister and her family--the Carlson's--sailed with them. The Carlson's had three children: two daughters, Anna and Hattie, and a young baby boy. The journey took six weeks.

On the way there was a bad storm. All of the passengers were seasick. The ship listed badly and to help keep the water out they stuffed their feather beds in the broken portholes. Finally, the crew got the ship under control, but everything was a mess. The passengers lost a lot of their belongings. Most everyone aboard was sick. Little Sabrina and the Carlson's baby boy died. Augusta was five years old and she remembered how the sharks were following the ship. If they hadn't buried the two little babies at sea, they believed the sharks would have turned over the ship. She said they put heavy iron in the blankets with the little bodies so they would sink fast before the sharks got them. It was a very sad day.

After they arrived in Fairfield, Iowa, Christina Elizabeth was born in 1870; Oscar in 1873; Walfrid in 1875; and Joe in 1878. They lived in Fairfield for many years.

In 1903 mother took her five youngest children--Harvey, Mary, Nettie, Ralph and Viola--and went to Fairfield to visit Grandma Olson. Grandfather Olson had died a few years before. Soon after that trip, Grandma Olson came to Fort Collins to live with mother and father. She died in 1927 at the age of 91.

Many of us in the second generation remember Grandma Olson and how she longed for Sweden. She always spoke in Swedish but she knew what was going on in English, too. Viola was her favorite. Viola would sit by her knee for hours while she was mending or sewing. She liked to give us Swedish mints from her apron pocket.

FATHER HAD TWO MARRIAGES

Father's first wife was Clara Wilhelmina Olson (1855-1878). They had two children: Helen (Smith) in 1876; Anna in 1877. Anna died in 1879. Clara Wilhelmina died in 1878. After Clara's death, father took the two little girls to Grandfather Olson's family in Fairborn, Iowa. He just had to get some farming done.

One day while visiting the girls he noticed they were hanging onto Augusta's skirts and calling her "Mamma." He said he just couldn't take them away. He had to marry Augusta so the little girls could have their "Mamma." So he said.
5.

Father married Augusta in 1879. She was 17 on January 3rd and they were married January 23rd of that year. They lived on father's farm in Adair County near Orient, Iowa. It was here their first four children were born: Martin born in 1880 and died two days later; Bertha born in 1881; Elmer born in 1883; and Frank born in 1885.

FATHER WANTED TO MOVE

Father wanted to be closer to his two brothers, Gus and Oscar. They both had their farms in Nebraska and were doing very well. One day while he was talking about this, he met a man who said he had a nice farm in Nebraska but he wanted to live in Iowa. So they arranged to trade--sight-unseen, even-up. Immediately father and mother started getting ready for this move. Everything they couldn't take in a covered wagon was sold. And they moved. When they got to Nebraska the farm was not there. It did not exist. Father had been bamboozled on the deal.

They stayed in Nebraska with his brothers for awhile. That was about all they could do. They didn't have the money or the energy to go back and fight about it. Wesley was born while they were in Nebraska in 1888.

Everyone was talking about the homestead land that was available in Kansas. Father decided that was what they should do, too. The family moved in a covered wagon pulled by two oxen--named Tom and Jerry. Elmer was about six or seven when they left Nebraska. He told us what he remembered most about the oxen was that one was big and fat and the other one was small and skinny--but they had equal strength. When they came to a river the oxen pulled the wagon across with the family all inside safe and dry.

After they reached St. Francis, Kansas, father put in a claim for homestead land, but it took awhile for the claim to go through. Meanwhile Clarence was born in St. Francis in 1891.

In August 1978 a group of us toured to St. Francis and found the deed in the St. Francis courthouse for 160 acres of tree claim property. On March 17, 1892 father paid $200 for the NW quarter of Section 13 in Cheyenne County, Kansas. We found the property along the Republican River near a place that use to be a small town called Jaqua sixteen miles from St. Francis.

They bought the tree claim property to have a place to live while they were waiting for the homestead land. To prove up on tree claim property the farmer has to agree to plant tree seedlings each year. There was a dugout that someone had used for living quarters on the bank across from a fine meadow near the river. So the family settled in the dugout until they could build a sod house on the homestead land. Edwin was born in the dugout in 1893.

Harvey has the original deed for the homestead land which was 160 acres on the hillside south and east of the tree claim property about one and a half miles apart.
It took a lot of doing to build a house that would be adequate and meet the needs for this family. By this time Elmer was 10 and Frank 8 years old. They were the oldest boys. Helen and Bertha were older, but they were needed in the gardening, cooking and caring for the younger children: Wesley, 5; Clarence, 2; and Edwin was just a baby.

Father planned a large four-room house. With the help of his two big boys he hauled the rocks from the river bed to make the foundation. The spot they selected was over a mile from the river. After the foundation they had to cut and haul the sod blocks for the walls. Sod contains buffalo grass with the matted roots which hold the sod together. They plowed long furrows in the rich meadow near the dugout. The sod was cut into chunks and placed on the wagon and hauled up the hill to the homestead location. These chunks were laid like bricks on the foundation. The windows and door frames were made and put in place. When all the walls were up, they made a top frame for the roof and ceiling. Then chunks of sod were placed on the frame. Large rocks were hauled up and put on the roof to keep the wind from blowing it away. The walls and roof were a foot thick or more, so the house was cool in summer and warm in winter.

But when it rained hard the roof leaked. Mother would get one pan, then another and another. Mary remembers one time it got so bad that she gathered the smaller children and put them under the dining room table to keep them dry.

The children born while they lived in the sod house were: Harvey born in 1895; Mary born in 1897; Nettie born in 1899; and Ralph born in 1900.

The sod house had a dirt floor. It was packed hard and swept smooth. Mother taught all of the children to be neat and clean. Each one had duties for each day. After breakfast each morning, father would say, "You do this...you do that..." Or he would say, "Mother will tell you what to do." Each evening father would check to be sure all the work was properly done, or he wanted to know a reason why. Elmer remembers getting the whip (which was father's belt) because he did not get enough done in the fields. Frank and Elmer were given a certain number of rows to weed or a certain area to cultivate and so forth. The other children were given duties about the house or garden according to what they were capable of doing.

The main room in the house was the living room, dining room and kitchen combined. The other three rooms were bedrooms: one for father and mother; one for the boys; and the other one for the girls. Father designed low tables which could be stacked for beds. Mattresses were made out of ticking which they bought and stuffed with cornhusks or clean straw whatever was available.
RESPECT FOR LAW AND ORDER

In this house full of Swedes the rules of proper conduct were strictly enforced. An offender was justly punished—usually paddled on the spot. The older children were strapped with father's belt. Adherence to law and order is characteristic of all Swedes. They do not believe in "sparing the rod and spoiling the child." However, justice was always administered with care in our family, and no child was ever punished too severely.

But when the children were good, they were not praised or pampered. To be good was expected. The children grew up with a knowledge of give and take, victory and defeat. There was naturally a mixture of good and bad days. The children soon learned that he who loses his or her temper usually loses out. They learned that if you give your best the averages will break pretty much in your favor. With so many in the family they had to be cooperative. Each one learned that "getting along" depended about 98 per cent on his or her own behavior. If mother needed to discuss something privately with father she talked in Swedish. As far as the children knew they never quarreled. At least they never knew.

Early in their marriage they agreed the children should speak English. They had come to America at a great sacrifice. They wanted the children to become good Americans and speak good English, not Swedish.

SPECIAL FAMILY EVENTS

Helen, the oldest, married Henry Smith in 1894. This was about the time the family moved into the sod house on the homestead. Helen and Henry took over the dugout. They stayed there until the entire family moved to Colorado in 1902.

Bertha, next to the oldest, became very sick with typhoid fever. She was in a coma for a long time before she died in 1895. Elmer was upset because the family didn't have a doctor. They firmly believed that prayer could heal all things. They prayed and prayed. Bertha was 14. Elmer was two years younger and he loved her dearly. For quite a while after she died, Elmer claimed he could see a white light over her grave that no one else could see.

After Bertha and Helen were gone, the older boys had to help mother with the younger children and household duties. Helen was not far away, but she soon had her own responsibilities.

A year after Bertha died Elmer got double pneumonia. He cried out for a doctor. He said he didn't want to die. His friend Chaffee, who was a year older, insisted on riding into St. Francis to get a doctor. Elmer often told us he thought Chaffee was about the best friend he ever had.

Clarence remembers one evening when Elmer's friend, Chaffee, came galloping across the field. He didn't know they had just put up a fence on the
property. He collided full force into the barbwire and ripped open his leg. It was bleeding terribly when he came in. Mother tried to bandage it the best she could. But they decided Clarence should take him the 16 miles into St. Francis to the doctor.

There were no doctors in Jaqua. When mother had a baby it was customary to have a midwife. Helen kept the records. She carefully recorded each birth, name and date. Then she had the midwife sign an affidavit. The records were so good that when Elmer needed a birth certificate at 65, he asked Helen and she got it for him without any trouble.

It wasn't more than a year or so after Chaffee ran into the barbwire that he got into an argument with a stranger who shot and killed him. Elmer was terribly upset about that, too.

In August 1978 when we were in the St. Francis area, we found both Bertha's and Chaffee's graves in the old Jaqua cemetery. After Bertha was buried, the family outlined her grave with large boulders brought up from the river bed. Those same stones are still there. It is the only grave in the cemetery marked in this manner.

THE CHILDREN REMEMBER WHEN...

Mother had a work schedule: Monday was washing; Tuesday, ironing; Wednesday, mending and sewing; Thursday, housecleaning and shopping; Friday, mainly for baking and canning, etc; on Saturday everyone cleaned up for Sunday. The boys brought in the round bathtub, water was heated, and they took turns bathing. The girls were first and the boys all had to stay outdoors. Then, the boys had their turns. Clean clothes were laid out for everyone. On Sunday morning they all dressed up in their Sunday clothes and went to church.

Church members often gave them good used clothes. Mother would mend, patch and clean the clothes before they were worn. She would say, "It isn't a disgrace to wear patches but it is to go dirty."

The family never had much money—in fact very little. But none of the children ever went to bed hungry if father could help it. He worked outside to get some cash for them to buy necessities. He had a contract delivering groceries to the Jaqua store from St. Francis for awhile. He bailed hay for the community, and there were times when he worked for 50¢ a day. On such occasions mother and the children had to do the work on the homestead.

Elmer and Frank had to do most of the farm work. There was so much to do. They had to take turns going to school—every other week. Elmer only got to finish the third grade. He said he always wanted to go to school more, but he never did. However, he was well educated in the school of life. So was Frank.

Father wanted his boys to stay with him until they were 21. He hoped to then be able to give each one a pair of horses at least to get started on his own. He wanted his boys to have good manners, always be polite—never swear or use profane language. He insisted they were not to smoke or drink until after
they reached 21. Then, he hoped they never would afterwards. He didn't want his children to have any bad habits. But Elmer had bad teeth that sometimes ached. He started chewing tobacco while he was still in his teens. This bothered father a lot and he tried to break him away from doing it. But Elmer rather liked the stuff and would hide it in the barn or put a wad on the roof when he went in to eat or sleep and pick it up when he came out. Most of the children knew this but they did not tell as they didn't like to see Elmer get whipped. Edwin remembers one time father was going to strap Elmer with his belt and Elmer shinneyed up the windmill and stayed there for quite a while—but he "got it" when he came down.

Clarence mentioned the strong winds and dust storms that were sometimes very bad. So much so you could not see across the road. Mary remembers how the house would get filled with dust. Clouds of dust would drift like snow. Mary said one such storm almost wiped out a mother hen and her baby chicks. Mother asked Mary to go out and hunt for them after the storm. It was a good thing she found them when she did. All that was sticking out was the mother hen's head. The little chicks were all snuggled under her and they would have soon smothered.

The girls helped mother make braided rugs for the floor. The dirt floor was covered with bright "rag rugs" that gave the place warmth and charm. Many homes today are not as attractive as this house that was full of Swedes.

One day when the preachers stopped by mother asked them to stay for dinner (the noon meal). She opened a can of red tomatoes. Mary said the tomatoes were just beautiful and would have been a real treat except by the time the guests had a second helping, they were all gone and the children didn't get any. It was customary for the children to wait for the second table. Adults and guests were served first. Wesley remembered about the tomatoes. So the next time the hired man was at the table and mother had made his favorite gravy he said, "Please don't take all of the gravy."

Edwin remembers one time Charlie Zimmerman—their closest neighbor—almost started a prairie fire. He was plowing some grassland near the homestead and inadvertently the bonfire he had made to heat up some coffee for his lunch broke out and started to spread. As soon as the boys and other nearby neighbors saw the smoke they all came running with barrels of water and gunny sacks. They soaked the sacks in the water and slapped at the fire until it was out.

Another time they all remembered: A swarm of locust came flying over and ate everything green. They had nothing to harvest that year. Elmer said they were lucky if they got one good crop out of ten.

FATHER WANTED TO MOVE TO COLORADO

Father didn't see much future for the family in Kansas. He wanted something better for the children. He had heard about beautiful Colorado and the good land for farming near Fort Collins, so he made a trip to check it out. He contacted the Phillips, who had a place near Ault. They had been church members of his church in Jaqua. The Phillips invited him to stop at their
place until arrangements could be made for a place of their own.

Father was very enthusiastic when he returned and his enthusiasm caught on with every member of the family. They soon started getting ready for the move. First, they had a sale and sold everything that they couldn't move. Then, they outfitted two large covered wagons with food and supplies for the trip. Father designed stacked beds so each one could sleep comfortably. Father was always inventing something better than anything he had seen before.

He made a special pen for their chickens on the back of one wagon. They decided on their best milking cow. They planned to take their six work horses and Elmer's mare named Minnie. Each covered wagon took two horses and their two-seated buggy with a top was revamped to be pulled by two horses—Daisy (their favorite riding horse) and Prince (a real beauty). So altogether they took seven horses with them to Colorado.

Elmer rode ahead on his mare and scouted out the way. They followed the Overland Trail. The Oregon Trail was further north.

Father was optimistic and happy about moving all the way. He kept telling them how well they were doing and said each day that they were making very good time. The trip was less than 200 miles, but it took two weeks. On the way a few chickens laid eggs and the cow gave a little milk. They took along enough food that mother had canned and stored. For meat they killed rabbits and some of their chickens which mother prepared in such a tasty way.

When they stopped for the night, father and the boys hoed and raked away the cactus for the horses and cow to lay down to rest. Mother let the chickens out to eat grasshoppers and exercise. Mary remembers how the chickens would sing when they got out. She said when it got dark it was no trouble at all as they wanted to get back in the pen to roost.

Harvey said the family arrived at the Phillips' place on May 2, 1902. Mr. Phillips had a quarter of a section in beets that needed thinning. So he was happy to have father and the boys to help out. Elmer said that place had a lot of prairie dog holes and when they tried to irrigate, the water would just disappear into the ground. The place was four miles from Ault. Harvey and Edwin said one day they decided to walk into Ault for a 10¢ item. They could see the buildings in the distance, but didn't realize how far it was—by the time they got back it seemed like a hundred.

There was a dugout on the place where Elmer and Frank slept. The rest of the family slept in the two wagons. While they were at this place in Ault a baby girl, Veda Augusta, was born. She only lived one month.

One day Jack Rigden came by riding on his horse. He had lost some horses and stopped to ask father if he had seen any strays. When Jack saw Prince and Daisy tied to the wagons, he asked if he could buy Prince. Father was always very hospitable and he never distrusted anyone. He asked him to come in and share their noon meal. When Jack got down from his horse and saw the string of good-looking boys that had gathered around, he said, "That's a great bunch of boys, are they all yours?" After dinner, he said "I've got just the place for you and those boys." By this time Elmer was 19, Frank - 17, Wesley - 14,
Clarence - 11, Edwin - 9, Harvey - 7, and Ralph, their 2-year old baby. Jack Rigden thought they were an outstanding bunch of boys. And they were.

That very day plans were made to move the family to his big farm southeast of Fort Collins. He had an empty five-room house just waiting for this family he said. Everyone agreed Jack Rigden was their angel in disguise. The day they moved to this place, which was near the Poudre River and rather close to the Cuthbertson beet dump on the Rigden farm, Jack Rigden rode by with a quarter of beef fixed ready to eat for the family. He simply dumped it off and said, "That's to take some of the wrinkles out of the boys' bellies." And rode off on his horse waving and smiling at the family who were all exclaiming with joy about his generosity. On many occasions after that he was kind and helpful in teaching the boys how to use large farm equipment and techniques of farming that they did not know.

About a year later, father had a chance to trade the homestead property in Kansas consisting of 320 acres for 160 acres along Fossil Creek south of Fort Collins. Elmer stayed on with Jack Rigden, eventually buying part of the farm for his own. The rest of the family moved to their own place along Fossil Creek. It was valued at $4,000 at the time. That same land is worth over two million now.

Their last two children and a baby girl who only lived three days were born in the Fort Collins area. The two children were: Viola--born in 1903-- and Ivan--born in 1905.

A GREATER HERITAGE THAN MONEY

The family may not have had much money but they always had good health and they kept the Faith. The strength of their character has been passed on to their children and their children's children. It is interesting to note that not one of this "House Full of Swedes" ever got in bad with the law or in any serious trouble. The generations that follow can be justly proud of their Swedish roots.

When father died, Nate Warren, a prominent Fort Collins citizen, said to Harvey, "Your father never had a lot of money or wealth as we sometimes think of it--but he left a greater heritage than money, he left an outstanding family."
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "SVENSK"

There seems to be a quality common to all Swedes, namely, an effort to achieve the very best. This quality shines through every accomplishment be it making a garden or building a house. The thoroughness is reflected in the job. When a Swedish housewife asks her husband to fasten a hook, he brings in the whole tool chest. "And I could have fixed it with a hairpin," she sighs. Not until top quality work has been achieved does a Swedish man consider himself master of his trade or profession. And this idea makes for constant striving.

In Sweden today thoroughness continues to be the earmark of production. It is a well known fact that high quality steel, pulp paper and glass products find market all over the world. The "S"-seal (where quality is tradition) has become the symbol of the Swedish image.

Swedes are uniformly polite, but distant. People often get the impression that Swedes are stiff and formal. But behind the appearance of reserve there is warmth and good will. But how does one get to it? Abrupt jolliness and a slap on the back will not do the trick. It is rather a process of slow melting. An evening at the dinner table with generous amounts of food and drink generally results in a letting down of the barriers. A Swede must be sure. Money does not play a large role in friendship. It is rather a probing whether the person is on an equal cultural level or moves in the same circle of friends. Receiving an invitation to a Swedish home is a mark of approval and acceptance. And after the reserve is broken down, the visitor learns that he will never have a truer, more sincere friend than the Swede.

What has been said about the aloofness of Swedes does not hold true when it comes to visiting relatives. They will receive relatives warmly, feed them well, and shower them with attention every hour of their stay. In fact they will fight over doing things such as coffee in bed on a flower-trimmed coffee tray.

LOVE OF NATURE

A Swede's love of nature is an acknowledged characteristic. He likes to take walks in the woods and enjoys all of the growing things around him. A daily walk seems to be one of life's necessities.

A Swedish youth who studied at the University of Minnesota a few years ago became interested in a popular girl on campus and decided to gain her attention. It was only natural that he, when phoning, asked her out for a walk. As he told it later, there was dead silence on the other end of the line. Finally, the devastating word came. "Why?" He was furious! "Can you imagine a girl asking a fellow why he wants to take her walking? Not until he was made aware that the rebuff was reciprocal--that to a popular girl a without
date without a car is unthinkable—did his indignation subside. But the blow this girl dealt him was enough to avert further romancing.

Fresh air is essential to well-being, says the Swede. He often sleeps with windows open, even in winter. As soon as school is out in June the family packs up and leaves for some favorite spot or by a lake somewhere. When the family owns a cottage, they return year after year. To row, or sail, or race across the water in a motor boat are favorite pastimes.

According to one professor, the fundamental characteristic of a Swede is "ganska hyggliga." The dictionary defines this as being "well-behaved, respectable, kind, good, decent, agreeable, nice, reasonable, moderate." Are we of Swedish descent all that?

THE OLD COUNTRY

In northern Sweden, where our folks came from, some of the land is very stony and the tillable pieces very small. The emigrating Swede called his native land "the old country" and often remembered how it looked in the winter and how it appeared in the summer when the soft breeze swayed the branches on his favorite birch tree. If he lived in the depths of Norrland, he remembered the dark, dense forest of pine and spruce. All emigrates lovingly remembered their blue shimmering lakes. That's why so many wanted to live in Minnesota.

Sweden is said to have 96,000 lakes. Together with the many rivers this comprises 8.6 per cent of the total area which is 173,630 square miles. It ranks fourth among the European countries and compared with a given area in the United States it comes out slightly larger than California. Sweden is a long and narrow country—about 1,000 miles in length and 350 miles across its widest part. The population as of January 1, 1970 was 8,012,000.

Going from south to north the three main regions are Götaland, Svealand and Norrland. These in turn are divided into provinces called "landskap." Most Swedish-Americans know some of these areas such as Värmland, Dalarna, Västergötland, Östergötland, Småland (where our grandparents came from), Halland, Skåne, Dalsland, and Bohuslän. Devotion to the province where one's parents or grandparents came becomes a matter of personal attachment.

Woodcraft products in general have for generations demonstrated the inbred skill of the Dala-people. Carving of toys for children, such as horses, birds or dolls was a common occupation in farm homes as well as in the woodsmen's quarters during the long winter evenings. When in times of poor crops it became necessary to augment the income with revenues from other sources, these items were sold in neighboring provinces, proving a profitable commodity. The work of painting and decorating the carved pieces was left to those families who had developed a special skill in so called "krusning." Dalara, often called the heart of Sweden, casts its spell over those living there; whenever they depart for other lands a bit of their own hearts is bound to be left in Dalara.
On the other hand, people from Skåne are loyal to their province. They have a song that tells the story. "He is happy to be Swedish—sometimes—but he glories in being born in Skåne!" The land is rich and fertile and the grain grows higher there and harvests are more abundant than in any other part of the country. An old saying reveals: "Good food and much food and food at the proper time." In Skåne today the habit of good eating lives on. A feast of special importance is the goose dinner eaten on Saint Märtens' day, the 11th of November. The legend of Saint Märtens, who died on that day in the year 400, tells how the pious prelate at one time took refuge in a goose pen when members of his diocese insisted on making him a bishop. The loud cackling of the geese revealed his whereabouts, however, and much against his will Märtens was installed as bishop. But he could not forget who caused him to yield. "Death unto the geese," he ordered. And ever since the people of Skåne have slaughtered and eaten goose on Saint Märtens' day.

Another legend deals with Småland and how it came into being. Our Lord, the story goes, was occupied with the creation of Skåne, making it the luscious land it is. And he directed Saint Peter to bring order to the piece of land north of it. Saint Peter went to work, but he felt he did not have much to do with. He began by placing a layer of soil on the multitude of rocks and stone formations and planting pine and spruce and birch between the streams and lakes. When finished he was quite proud of his work. But before Our Lord had a chance to come and inspect it, a heavy rainstorm washed away the soil and made bare the long stretches of rocks and boulders in the ground. Saint Peter was in despair. When Our Lord saw the stony, meager ground he rebuked his helper. "I have just created a rich, fruitful land to the south," he said. "You go there and create men to live in it. I will create men to live here. Mine shall be a harder task." So Saint Peter went. Our Lord created the "smålanning" and made him strong and ambitious, stubborn and shrewd. And he called the land "Småland" because the tillable pieces were so small. Ever since it has been said about the "smålanning" that even if he is placed on a rock at sea, he will find a way of livelihood.

So much for the legend. How does it coincide with reality? The stony ground has been there ever since creation. It is still there today. But most of the loose rocks have been removed and gathered into neat stone fences around small patches of land. In order to get even a small piece of soil cleared, the strong hard working Småland farmer had to carry away the heavy stones with his bare hands. It is said that his arms grew longer and longer as he worked at it. Farming was more or less an endurance test. In all too many cases it failed to give the farmer even a meager subsistence.

By the middle of the nineteenth century stories began to reach the poor Småland farmer concerning America—the wondrous country where there were wide stretches of land to be had with soil so rich and fertile that seed sprouted almost as soon as it touched the ground. He owed it to his family to try his luck. One
family after another began the trek to the Middle West. A lot of families headed for Minnesota. (Ours headed for Iowa.)

A SIP OR TWO

Coffee is essential to the majority of Swedes, whether it comes in the afternoon or after dinner. Swedish people do not drink coffee with their dinner—it comes after the meal and is served usually in another room, often before an open fire with candles lighted. "Kaffe på maten" denotes relaxation—a moment of the day dedicated to pleasant talk and friendly chats. They have a song that can be translated like this:

"A cup of coffee is the best drink in the whole world,
It braces the body and strengthens the soul,
And thrills one's whole being from the head
All the way down to the toes."

Great efforts are made to create a healthy attitude among young people in regard to drinking, even advocating unconditional abstinence. A mild reminder to adult buyers of liquor is printed on the paper bags used by government controlled stores. It says: "A misguided service--to furnish liquor to young people."

The Swedish regulations about drunken driving are rigorous. When going to a dinner party, a husband and wife will decide beforehand who is going to drive, and the spouse so willing abstains that evening from any alcoholic drinking. They do not dare to take the chance of being stopped on the way home for a sobriety test. A prison term awaits the guilty one if caught.

The word "skål" has become internationally recognized and many interpretations have been suggested. It actually means vessel. In ancient times the ale was poured in one large bowl and each guest helped himself by dipping the cup and drinking out of it. The host said, "Help yourself from the bowl." During the evening the host's prompting may have been modified to "Skål." The custom today of extending a "Skål" of welcome to a guest is truly an inherent part of Swedish hospitality.

ABOUT CHRISTMAS

There is a dedication to the sun that is still prevalent among the Nordic people. When fall comes gloominess grips the Swedes as the days become shorter. They isolate themselves—stay at home with their books and make no effort to associate with others. However, finally comes the day of Lucia. The word "Lucia" can be traced to the Latin word "lux" meaning light. According to the Old Style calendar the longest night of the year was December 13 which marked the beginning of brighter days to come.
On December 13 the lights begin to shine and doors are opened. It is the day that actually initiates the Christmas season and it is joyously celebrated. Already in the early morning the traditional Lucia coffee is served. In most Swedish homes, where there is a daughter or young relative, the members of the household are treated to coffee in bed with the customary Lucia buns. The one representing Lucia is dressed in a long white robe with a red sash around her waist and wears a metal crown with seven lighted candles.

The time between Saint Lucia's day and Christmas has always been marked by hustling feet and busy fingers. Not only should all the baking and food preparation be done, but the house should be cleaned from attic to cellar. The children count the days...the day before the day before...until at last the day itself arrives. The climax is on Christmas Eve, not Christmas Day.

The final meal on Christmas Eve is by tradition "lutfisk" and "risgrynsgröt" (rice pudding) preceded by a light smorgasbord. Today, the Christmas meal consists of meat washed down with dark, foamy ale. At coffee later the seven kinds of cookies are brought forth and enjoyed.

The children hang around wondering if "jultomten" (Santa Claus) will ever come. And eventually "jultomten" arrives dragging his sack with him that is filled with Christmas presents. "Finns det några snälla barn här?" (Are there any nice children here?) he asks. Are there ever any but nice children at Christmas?

So begins the distribution of gifts and within minutes the room is a sea of billowing tissue paper and bulky wrappings. If the family is one of adults, it is customary to prepare humorous rhymes for each package. The reading of the verses furnishes added enjoyment to the giving. Jokingly, it is said of many a Swedish writer that his talent was discovered by his rhymes on Christmas gifts.
GRANDMOTHER WOULD SETTLE AN ARGUMENT WITH A PROVERB

From the Proverbs of the Old Testament to the proverbs from many cultures, the collective wisdom of the ages become a rich well out of which the world at large may still draw. By common concept these proverbs become words of magic. The early Northmen used sayings from "Havamal" which reflected Viking traditions.

Swedish proverbs cover many subjects. Often they reveal concepts of man's attitude towards God who is referred to as "Vår Herre" (Our Lord). Here are some examples:

"Allt har en början utom Vår Herre." (Everything has a beginning except Our Lord.)

"När Vår Herre ger ska man hålla såckens öppen." (When Our Lord gives one should keep the sack open.)

"Lagom är bäst." (Doing right is best.)

"Nya kvastar sopa bäst." (A new broom sweeps clean.)

"Högmod går före fall." (Pride goeth before a fall.)

"Små grytor ha också oron." (Little people have big ears.)

"Som man biddar far man ligga." (As you make your bed so you must lie in it.)

"När katten är borta dansa rättorna på bordet." (When the cat is away the mice will play.)

"Man får ta seden dit man kommer." (When in Rome do as the Romans do.)

"Den illa gör han illa far." (He who does evil fares evil.)

"Man ska smida medan järnet är varmt." (Strike while the iron is hot.)

"Små barn, små bekymmer--stora barn, stora bekymmer." (Small children, small worries--big children, big worries.)

"Borta bra, men hemma bäst." (Being away is fine, but being at home is best.)

"Tomma tunnor skamla mest." (Empty barrels make the loudest noise.)