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When teaching in Helmer a schoolboy got ill. A train hit one of his family's cows and broke it's leg. Stretched the leg slowly with a wire tightener and eased the bones back into place and made a cedar splint. The cow survived.

Recalls life in Sweden. Father went to America in 1892 because it was hard all over. The rainy harvest of 1893 and owners had to feed thrashing crew till it cleared up. Stacks sprouted.

Uncle Storm came before and built a house. Father worked for Per Johanson's sawmill and traded lumber for board and room.

Father sent for the family three times and they were torn over whether to come. Parting with her 12-year old sweetheart at the depot.

A graphic description of cleaning fish as a child in Sweden all night for one dime. Her hand clamped so hard around that dime that it had to be pryed open. Times hard all over.


What they took from Sweden to America. A double wedding in Sweden with white (!) dresses. Good-by dinner, railroad to Kristiansand (awful outhouse), Castle Garden and railroad trip. One man who'd returned to Sweden for his sister and her children was turned back.

The trip over: a storm, sighting the Statue of Liberty and instruction on patriotism by a young man. The train trip.

Buying a pamphlet and cherries in Spokane by herself for a dime. Jumping into her father's arms at the depot in Troy. Home at last.
How her father built a two room log house with a broadaxe, no nails and a corner brace with square nails. Father had varnished the woodwork and put up oilcloth.

Olivia sent to make a living soon after arriving. Father leaves the day after their arrival to finish building the Deary Church and the children work in the garden.

The teacher at the Spring Valley school, John Ogden, scared children by throwing a knife. Reading at night with a tallow candle, and seeing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which she had read in Sweden.

Often little to eat. Pretending to eat lunch in Sweden at school when she had nothing. Mr. Brian, Pres. of W.S.U. encouraged her to continue studying.

Swedes and Irish around Troy. Italians worked on the railroad. Vollmer staked people and got driven out of town.

With Sam & Laura Schrager
December 14, 1973
II. Transcript
Anna Marie Anderson Oslund was a teacher in the Troy area for many years. She vividly remembers how hard life was in Sweden as a child. She also describes the trip that her mother and three sisters made over to the United States at length - the preparations, the boat ride, arrival at Castle Garden and the train ride to Troy. Other memories on this tape include: a mean schoolteacher, setting a cow's leg, her determination to study and to teach.
SAM SCHRAGER: Could you tell us about what it was like in Sweden when you were a little girl, before you came over?

ANNA MARIE OSLUND: Well I can tell you, and I can tell a lot. But I started to do that one time just because I was exuberant over something, and maybe because I was bragging about Sweden, or maybe it was something else, I don't know what I did—because my sister stepped on my foot, and that meant you keep still this time. That's what it meant, you know. So, I don't know, but I could tell it to you—you don't have to make use of it right now, less I say so. All right?

I was born in 1891 and in 1892, the end of that year, the summer (it was a late summer), my father went to America to find a better life for all of us. It was hard all over, and he thought he'd try, he'd come. Well it happened to be that terrible summer, when it rained so terrible here in this part of the country, around Genesee and Moscow and all over. It rained and it rained, and they had put up the little bit of grain that they had. They stacked them in bundles, you know, and laid them like this, like a sugar cone. And then they did have some machines, some thrashing machines, and when they got to a place and it was raining, and they couldn't do anything about it, the owner would have to feed them until it dried up. And in one place the stacks were green like Christmas trees; it was growing, you know, right in the stacks. Big tall ones about twice the height of a man, big as, oh bigger than this room. And they put the bundles with the tassles in, the wheat in like that and had them slanting so if it rained it followed the straws, you see, and it wouldn't rot the grain. But it was such a long time, over a month I think before they were able to do...molded for some people. They didn't have anything to cover them with, and gunny sacks, and well, it
was an awful thing. In this particular place in Genesee they killed a cow and two pigs before they got rid of those men. Because they had to eat you know. Because that was the law of the land.

My father came in '92, and that terrible rain was in '93, and he didn't have any money. His uncle had come here a year or two before, and he had put up a house which was still standing until just a few years ago. (Right over the hill, because I bought the place just as to get that place, Uncle Storm's. He was a soldier.)

My father, I'll go back to him. In order to get food, a fellah by the name of Per Johanson was putting up a mill, and as soon as they got some of the wheels going, why they began to saw, because they had to have lumber for houses and everything, and shelter for people and animals. And he worked for Per Johanson, and Per Johanson traded some boards to my father for his work. And father took those boards and traded them for food where he was living you know. There was a family there that took him in, and he got boards from Per Johanson, and the boards my father gave to this family so that they could build something to protect themselves. That was during the hard days.

Well then, in the late part of summer my father had worked enough to get a ticket back to Sweden. He couldn't in those first years, but the last year they were building all over, and including this Uncle Storm, you know. And then my mother got ill. She TRIED to work. She tried to do so many things and he KNEW it. He was afraid that he'd lose her, but he figured that with the gold and things in the United States; it would be such a wonderful thing to make money and get back there, you see. That's what he was trying to do. And he came home then in 1896. He was there in '92-'96. I figured out long ago that it was four years between each time when he went and came.

(So he went home, and mother was ill. And had taken her to a neighbor that took care of her. And one aunt, this Storm that was here in America
left his wife and three children, and this woman, my aunt, was a very religious woman. All children when they're baptized, they have a godmother to nurse a child if anything should happen to it, and the mother died or something like that. So this Storm she took me, and a neighbor some distance away from us who was indirectly, well acquainted and friends to my mother, they too her. She was three or four years older I think it was. And then another relative took took the third one of us. So there were three little girls. And they had promised to God that they would nurture and care for the children if something should happen to the mother, too.)

Well he came home. They wrote to my father and he came home, and immediately got a home. We did have a home, but there wasn't anything to do with it. And he went to this home that he put a payment down on, and then he went to work. He was a woodsman you know, and a carpenter. At '96 he went back to Sweden and stayed there for four years and then went back to the United States again. And mother still was not well. It was too much for her, what she'd done—her wood and snow and everything like that. It was the same all over. And that '93, 1893 was the same in Europe as it was here in America. And then we had another sister after father got back to the United States.

So there was Signe she was eight years old. And my sister Ester was ten, and I was 12, and my sister Olivia was 16. That's the way it came out. And she (Olivia) was working in a factory in Sweden. And mother called us together; there was a letter from dad. And he said he wanted us to come. Oh, Olivia was sixteen—and lots of fun in Sweden. And then he wrote again. And couldn't decide.

And I think on the third time he says, "Now," he says, "you come, or I'll have to come and get you, and that'll be lots more expensive." All right, mother called her children, little flock together, and she said, "Do
you want to go?" she said to Olivia. "Yes," no, "No," she said, "No! I don't want to go, because life's just beginning you know, for getting good jobs and things like that in Sweden too." And Ester, all her life she has cried. (Whimpers:) "O-oo-oh," yes, she didn't want to go either. And then Signe, she just big eyed, and she didn't know much what it was all about at that age. And I was the last one that she asked. And I said, "Yup, I'm going." (Cries:) "O-o-o-h." And everybody cried and I cried too. (Laughs)

You know, if you have lived in a country, born there and lived there for generations, you know it's kind of something that draws you, that holds you. You can improve your old country, as they called it, just as well as you improve it in a new country. And it got to be more and more machinery, and I can remember when I saw the first binder in Sweden.

Anyway, we were through school then in the spring. And we sold what we had, but there wasn't enough for tickets for all of us, but father had sent enough money to go. And oh, it was exciting to think of it, and...

I'd be back. I had a sweetheart. He was twelve and I was twelve. And we went on the other side of the station, and he'd bought a great big sack of candy. And they didn't have bags to put candy in, in those days. They'd take a... (Mrs. Oslund folds paper to form a cone.)

(End of Side A)

And then, like I said, we had a great big one (sack of candy). And he took some and he says, "I don't want you to go," and I said, "I don't want to go either." And he said, "Let's run away." Twelve years old! (Laughs) Oh. (She imitates their sobbing and consoling speech.) "Have some more candy." And I'd have some more candy. And cried and (imitates sobbing and sniffing.) (Laughs)

I've laughed many a time when I've thought about it. Well, but he was
more true to me than I was to him. I came to a foreign country and it was just wonderful. And the last, I was teaching in Helmer when I got the last letter from him.

SAM: Before you tell about coming over, would you tell about the fish cleaning in Sweden?

AMO: Yah. I can tell you. That was when we were so poor, you see, and my father was gone and my mother was ill. And there were people that lived kind of high in the hills, the mountains east of us and quite a distance too from Hudiksvall which was, Hudiksvall was the biggest city in that part of the country. And so, when fishing season came, the fishermen would catch fish. The men that worked, (farmers), well, they practiced (?) on the ground too you know of soil. They took their horse, they had one horse and a cart, two wheel cart, you see, big wheels like this, and then would be a box on it, like that. And then would put them into shafts, you know one horse. And so they would drive like that from the hills, and go to Hudiksvall and then they'd have to wait sometimes for the fish to come in, and they did, why they loaded it into those carts, you know. And there were three or four or five men went, in almost like a funeral procession when they went home. But there was a law that you couldn't clean fish in or near Hudiksvall, a city, because of flies and smells and things like that. They had to go farther away, out into the country, and it didn't matter if it smelled out in the country I guess. But around the city they couldn't have anything like that.

Well, as I said, Mother was sick, and my sister Ester went with me, but she didn't do anything. She was trying to whip away mosquitoes all night while we were cleaning the fish. (And Olivia didn't do anything like that. She had night shift I think at the factory, I don't know how that was. But anyway, it was Ester and I that were there.) And those fisherman would come... 'course the sun is up just about all night in northern Sweden.
Anyway, we had gunny sack aprons, and you stand on your knees, and the man comes and says, "How many," well, in English they called it pfererling, that's a fourth of the barrel. And "How many pfererlinger do you want?" And you'd say, "Oh, one," if it's a young girl and, "Well, no more?" "Well, I'd take two," somebody else said. And those women, you know, possibly take four.

And I thought, "Oh my gosh, I bet I can do that." While they were talking, I was practicing. I hadn't ever practiced before. You stand on your knees and you take a fish like this and you cut out, take the fingers in this hand and tear out the entrails, and put the entrails here, and the fish there on the grass. (Mrs. Oslund demonstrates taking a fish in her left hand, cleaning the entrails out with her right hand, and placing the cleaned fish on the left and entrails on the right.) It was green, nice green grass, by a little, small lake, very small. And so you sit like that all night, but you couldn't...

A pfereling, a fourth of a barrel is pretty big, even at that, to pick up every fish. And I didn't have any stockings on; it was summertime, you know. I stood on my knees, and there were other kids there too. Then the scales from the fish, it'd come up if I moved you know, come up under my skirts, and I tried to have that gunny sack apron you know, to keep it down. And the only thing that Ester would do would be to try to chase the mosquitoes, that's about the only thing she could do.

But I was determined I was going to do what the women did, you see. And finally it was getting towards morning and I was tired, oh, gosh. And then a woman came up, and she said something about God wouldn't be pleased if you misused your body like that or something. She said something, and I was shocked to think that I did that just to get food, you know.

Well, and how much do you suppose I got? One dime! One dime. (Pause) I went home to mother, and I had clasped that dime so tight in my hand...
(The rest of the kids were walking too around me. They were in the same shape, all of them.) And we just couldn't get the hand, the bones to straighten out. Finally got it...and there was that dime. Of course I gave it to mother. But I learned to work fast you know. They just go like this, (demonstrates), like knitting a stocking or something. It's all right, nobody complained.

(And that's the thing that I am dissatisfied with in America; most people are dissatisfied, always dissatisfied. Instead of just doing it, and listening and learning, they have to complain. Oh, but if it hadn't been for so-and-so and so-and-so. And he's just a shunk anyway. They're lazy, they wouldn't do anything, and talk about...instead of going out and work, do something.)

SAM: Why do you think times were so hard in Sweden?

AMO: It's the same in Norway, just exactly, and in Denmark. And here in this country there were few and far between in 1892. There has been lots of people coming, but they were going westward, westward, westward all the time. Oh I've seen the women here—well, I've pitched hay all my life at home, here in this country. I've been behind the plow, I've driven the horses in the field. But we got a nice home too, I tell you. But the girls, we did the same thing, and my children have done the same thing. They want too, and they got through, all of them. (Now my sister, Ester and Olivia are both graduate nurses. And I had my college training at Washington State College and some in the U. of I., and all kinds of correspondence courses and I don't, heavenly help me, I don't know what all it was in order to get through.)

And I had always dreamed that I was going to teach, you know. First day I went to school, I had, before that I had, all kinds of rag dolls. I got to be so I could handle them pretty good, too. Then my sister Signe, was just little then, was sitting on the floor. And came home, and I put Signe, she (1) got a little rod and she (1) put Signe there. "You sit there." And
that was I, now that I'm saying there. And each one, I shook a finger at 'em, so I realized afterwards when I got older you know, how really I was aping the teacher. So, I had to make them mind.

We went to school every other day. You went to school one day to get, to be taught, and to have lessons assigned to you. And you go home, and you work all day long, to do what the teacher has said to do, and go through it and have your books and everything. And I don't know but what it's a good idea. The expense of schooling today is terrible. Just awful.

SAM: Can I ask you one more story about Sweden?

AMO: Yeh.

SAM: The story about getting licorice. Do you remember that or was it a fern? You told us about getting ferns...

AMO: Oh yes, yes, right behind our house. Here was a rich man's house over there, and I was related to them too. And here was another relative, and here was a house here, and then a road went above the hillside there. (And there was cliffs and that's glacial drift you know in Sweden, you know, you can study that, by just studying the hillside almost.) And there's springs all over. In through the rocks, in between the layers, it comes out you know. And maybe it's only as high as this, or twice as high as this. And then all kinds of fern especially this, oh what was it. (My mother had a Latin name for it, and I can't remember now.) Anyway, we called it sweet fern too, because the roots were sweet. Sweet like sugar. And the little ferns only went a little bit better than a foot, just about that.

And here's another cluster, and here's another cluster and there's one there's a bigger—and you have to be careful because that water trickles and runs, you know, the all year 'round, you know, except when it's frozen in wintertime and there's all snow on it. And it's just slimy, you know to get...you've seen that in lots of places in creeks, you walk on it and get
so slimy kind of. And I can remember how I'd, like a claw, I tried to get into the rocks, you know, and climb. And then you have to go easy so you don't break the root of it then.

It's like a carrot almost or parsnip, only it's crooked roots on it. But the food part of it is in that stem. And then we'd chew that, instead of sugar. And you can boil it and get the sugar out of it, you know, sweeten something, but it takes an awful long time to do all those things. And then little by little why it's shipped into Sweden, and they got sugar, and they got sugar in Russia, they got sugar in Denmark and it's the same all over.

SAM: What do you remember about the trip over to the United States and then the trip out to here?

AMO: Well, father sent money for the tickets and for some clothes. I 'spose he didn't want the people to see that we came in patched clothes, I don't know. And we took all the things that we possibly could.

For an example: my mother's wedding dress. And pleated all around, but black. At that time, it was the style to have black wedding dresses, with white tulle around the neck, you know, and the sleeves, and so on, like that. The very last year that we were in Sweden, they had a double wedding from some wealthy home, or two homes it must have been. And two brides you know. Two couples got married, and they had white dresses. And we thought that was the most wonderful thing in the world to have white dresses!

But anyway, to go back to what we wore then, it wasn't much, that we had with us to take. Ester and I each had a bundle of clothing and bedding, because they thought they didn't have any bedding in America I guess or something like that, I don't know. But we had, and had strapped those bundles. (And my little sister had a wooden butter...well, they're small wooden dishes, just like they used to have, had wooden buckets. It's a small bucket and with a lid on it, put a little plug of wood, key kind of, to keep the lid on.
That was very nice and it is, and the wood is in Moscow, now.)

And Ester and I carried the bundles, and Olivia carried a big suitcase. She had the worst of it, but she was the strongest too, you know. And mother had something too in the way of a suitcase. And we ate a fine dinner at the neighbor's house when we left. Hauled us to the station, and stations very much like the stations here. And we were to go a little bit farther north and cross the the Venchula mountains between Norway and Sweden, and went down into Kristiansand. Then we unloaded everything and we went to Castle Garden, and at, what's the name of the isle, what is it? Castle? Oh, I taught that so many years. Castle, Castle Gardens, it's almost like a, being in a jail you know. Castle Garden. Iron spokes in, you know, divide them, when we had to sign out and sign out and sign out, and then we got word that we couldn't leave before two days. And we didn't have any food. (Break)

The first day, and I just can't tell you before a gentleman, but I will. My mother said, "Now, you'd better go to the outhouse before you get on the ship." And we watched where others went, the men went one direction, the women in another one. And, it was the awfulest place that I've ever seen in my life! And mother was the last one to go, and she said, "You better pray to God that you don't get to a country that looks like this." (Laughs) She was so shocked you know. And we all were, terribe.

Well, we got to Castle Garden, they unloaded us, and...It was kind of fine too, in a way, educational in a way, because we had...As long as we were on the ship the ticket included the food, you know, on the ship, and the same way at Castle Garden, on Elise Island, now there the word came...They had to stay overnight at Castle Garden, and they slept in swings, net swings, you know. One person in each one, you know. And children cried, and were tried and sick, and mother's stringy hair, you know, and travelled so far, and--oh, it was terrible!

Then we finally were checked out. And when they were checked--when they
was sorting out everything, and people, who they were, and they show the papers and everything like that. Then one man, oh, he was a nice man he was...There was four small children and he was quite old, he was an uncle to them. And he had been to America, and had purposely gone to Sweden to bring his sister and the children to America. And the father was here to work until they got here, you know. And we thought they were nice, and they were. And we switched when we had to get out of those chicken coops that we were in. They dragged this man back, and wouldn't let him go, they said he had marks of T. B.; he couldn't go to America. And there she was left, and had never figured out anything about America. With only her children she has left a fairly nice home in Sweden. And I don't know how it turned out. I wish often, that I had found out something about it later, but I didn't.

Oh, things like that all the time, you know.

LAURA SCHRAGER: Was the trip over in the boat, was that uncomfortable at all?

AMO: Oh, well, at first it wasn't, it was exciting, and we sang and they danced and everything like that. But then a storm came up. A terrible storm! And they pushed the kids down in the holes like that, you know, without trying to find out which partition they were in or anything like that. And "buckle it down," because the water goes over the ship, you see, the deck, the top deck. And most of them came steerage, you see. It was awful.

But then, pretty soon this sun shown, and we're getting closer and closer all the time. And we figured you know it was hours and days. And then it was night, not midnight, it was before midnight. We stood looking and looking and looking, and kids all around, you know. I was making doll clothes, I can remember. What in the world what I did that for, I had it for a long time, just for a souvenir I guess. And someone called,"Oh! There's a light." "A liight!" "A light." And then it got a little bit lighter, and lighter. And then that Statue of Liberty. They fell on their
knees and thanked God that they, who had helped us to get over. It isn't like when somebody goes to sea, because they want to see.

And there stood a tall fellow by me. I tried and tried to see, you know. And he lifted me up. And then he set me down, and he put his hand on my shoulder. And he said, "Little girl," and then he spoke Swedish. I didn't know, he had been to Sweden several times, and he was a Swede, tall handsome guy. And he said, "Be thankful, always be thankful, for the land that you're coming to! Build it up, build it up! Do nothing wrong against it." Oh, he gave me a real sermon, by myself. And then he quoted in Swedish. "Give your tired, your poor, your great masses longing to be free."

That's at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, you know. I only quoted some of it. And I think this is a wonderful country that we're in. Wonderful. Well, we got to New York, and there's where we had so much trouble because, not for us, but that, those people, other people too.

And it clicked, (the train) and we had this food. They filled that and I didn't know what was in it. Mother was trying to sleep, and I don't know. Anyway I wanted to, I was listening, listening I was sleepy too and sleeping and then (slowly falling asleep:) pretty soon we're gonna get there, and I thought, oh pretty soon we were going to get there pret-ty-soon-we're-going-to-get-there.

And then we began to climb the Rockies. And so help me, if I had been in a musician (whistle of train passing through Troy) and a singer I would have done something I read—Because, I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can-I-think-I-can "tooooot" and then, it would go down. I thought I could I thought I could I thought I could I thought I could I thought I could (Laughs). And...

(End of Side B)
Well, we went. We got out of food, didn't make any difference. And then we got to Spokane. And mother said, I don't whether she said the dime that I first gave her, but anyway, she gave a dime. She said, "Did you say you wanted to have something, buy something for that dime?" "Yes," I said, "I do."

So I went, by myself, I went out, and I thought the conductor said be ready to board the train at eight o'clock. (Well, I...clock, clock, cloka clok is Swedish you know, I knew that, and many other words too.)

And then, I looked in the window, and I thought, "Lord, what am I going to do with this dime." And I thought if I could only find a little book, I had the idea in my head that if a book was small why it would be more easy to read a pamphlet you know. And I asked how much that was. And he looked at me and he said, "What are you going to use it for?"

"Well, I want that little book, if this is enough."

"Well, I think you can get if for less than ten, five cents," he said, "Well, keep that five," he said. And then "What you gonna do with that five now?"

"Well, "I said, "Mother is sick, and she can't do anything about it, and I thought if we could get a few cherries, each one of us."

He gave me a bag of cherries. Then, I was on top of the world, I tell you!

Then onto the train again at Spokane. And oh, we fixed our hair, you know and we fixed up in every way! And checked the baggage and everything so we wouldn't loose anything. (And, by the way, when we crossed the plains—we had to have hats mind you, we got hats, because we were going to America. And we had 'em on a shelf above us you know, like they have all kinds of things. And those tornadoes, those twisters you know, out on the plains, Kansas and Nebraska and those places. And all the hats but one went out
through that—well, mother didn't have hers on, the girls, maybe it was only three that went through.) Didn't make any difference, we were getting home, getting home. The first home that we'd ever had, that had been like anything. We're going home, we're going to live in the United States, oh my, my, my.

Then "toooot" right out here. And there stood my father at the bottom of the steps. And mother started out first, and Signe, my sister eight, seven I guess she was, somehow I kicked her, because I jumped right in my father's arms. And then a few feet away from it against the, depot, and there stood Uncle Storm, oh, gray haired, you know, white, you know. And holding out his arms too.

And then we walked to the hotel, same hotel that is there now. And they had a special dinner for us, because Gabe my father has told them that his family was coming. And we didn't get in before about two o'clock in the afternoon on a Sunday. And oh, my, the food, the meat! In those days they had platters for each, they didn't have plates, ordinary plates, but the meat part was just like it is now when we have, to pass a meat platter you know.

And then, "How far is it to home?" "Oh, just about another hour now maybe, driving." And there was a man here, he was only about ten years old, and his father got a livery barn, you know how you get a rig at the livery barn, that boy drove, you know. And I can't find him, I'm not so sure of the name or anything. Anyway, he dumped us and went back. And then we were home. What do you think we did? Well, we cried for one thing, and we thanked God for another one. And I've always done that. And father has gotten some... I have a plate here that belonged to my mother. (Break)