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SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF  
THE SETTLEMENT OF BISHOP HILL  
COLONY by John Root. (1896)

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# SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE SETTLEMENT OF BISHOP HILL COLONY

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HELD AT BISHOP HILL, ILLINOIS, WEDNESDAY AND  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 AND 24, 1896



# Semi-Centennial Celebration

OF THE

SETTLEMENT OF

# BISHOP HILL COLONY



HELD AT BISHOP HILL, ILLINOIS

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup> AND 24

1896



**PREFACE.**

**TO THE READER:**

Believing that it will be appreciated by posterity if a record of the proceedings of the Semi-Centennial celebration of the settlement of Bishop Hill Colony, in Henry County, Illinois, which was held at Bishop Hill on September 23 and 24, 1896, would be preserved in a more permanent form, the writer has undertaken the task by copying said proceedings which were published at the time by E. E. Fitch in a special edition of "The Galva Weekly News," which is herewith submitted in pamphlet form, with some additions in the line of views of buildings, photographs and groups of old settlers taken in the park at the Reunion, with the expressed wish that on the one hundredth anniversary of the event, these proceedings be read as a part of the exercises of the occasion. The children, and men, and women, who are coming upon the scene of action even now, cannot be made to realize the conditions existing here when the first pioneers blazed the way in the wilderness, to this now fertile garden spot of the New World; and by 1946 these proceedings will perhaps read like fairy tales, rivaling in their truth the most fertile imagination of a Jules Verne and a Hans Christian Anderson.

**JOHN ROOT.**

**GALVA, ILLINOIS, MAY 29, 1909.**



**Winter Scene in Bishop Hill. Looking West from Post Office.**

I.H.S.  
2056

# A SOUVENIR OF THE PROCEEDINGS

of the Semi-Centennial Celebration  
of the Settlement of Bishop Hill

HELD AT BISHOP HILL, HENRY COUNTY,  
ILLINOIS, SEPTEMBER 23-24, 1896.

## OFFICERS.

JOHN ROOT, President. P. L. JOHNSON, Secretary.  
A. C. MYRTENGREN, Treasurer.

### Committee on Arrangements.

John Root, E. L. Swanson,  
A. E. Bergland, Magnus Johnson,  
P. L. Johnson, P. O. Krans,  
J. W. Olson, Nels Runquist.

### Committee on Finance.

Dr. John Headland, J. P. Chaiser, John Soderquist.  
A. C. Myrtengren, Jacob Jacobson,

### Invitation Committee.

P. O. Norling, Nels Runquist,  
John Westberg, Eric Headland,  
John Soderquist, O. B. Olson.

### Committee on Date.

Martin Johnson, John Helsen, Peter Johnson.  
Eric Headland, J. W. Olson,

### Committee on Music.

P. L. Johnson, A. E. Bergland, Daniel Lindbeck.

### Committee on Relics.

Eric Anderson, Olof Matthews, J. E. Lindbeck.

### Historical Committee.

Nels Runquist, John Helsen, Martin Johnson.

### Reception Committee.

Eric Headland, J. E. Lindbeck, J. P. Chaiser.  
A. C. Myrtengren, Jacob Jacobson,

### Committee to Locate Monument.

Peter Johnson, A. Barlow, J. P. Chaiser.

### Committee on Inscription.

John Root, J. W. Olson, A. E. Bergland.

### Committee on Provisions.

Eric Headland, P. J. Wickblom,  
Ole Lock, Mrs. Helen Lindwall,  
Mrs. P. O. Norling, Eric Troline,  
O. W. Johnson, Mrs. Mary Olson,  
Mrs. Martha Johnson, Mrs. J. M. Kingdon.

**The Chorus:**—Miss Alice Chaiser, Mrs. E. L. Swanson, Mrs. O. B. Olson, Soprano; Misses Florence Lindbeck and Winnie Chaiser and Mrs. P. J. Lindbeck, Alto; Rev. Axel Gabrielson, P. J. Lindbeck and John Soderquist, Tenor; P. L. Johnson, O. W. Johnson, P. J. Stoneberg, Bass.

**Male Quintet:**—P. J. Lindbeck, Rev. Axel Gabrielson, 1st Tenor; P. L. Johnson, 2nd Tenor; O. W. Johnson, 1st Bass; P. J. Stoneberg, 2nd Bass; Organist, Miss Esther Peterson.



### MONUMENT IN PARK.

Unveiled by Master Earl Root, afternoon of Sept. 23, 1896.

### INSCRIPTION.

1846.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

The Hardy Pioneers

Who, in Order to Secure

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,**

Left **SWEDEN,** Their Native Land,

With all the Endearments

Of Home and Kindred,

And Founded

**BISHOP HILL COLONY,**

On the Uninhabited Prairies of

**ILLINOIS.**

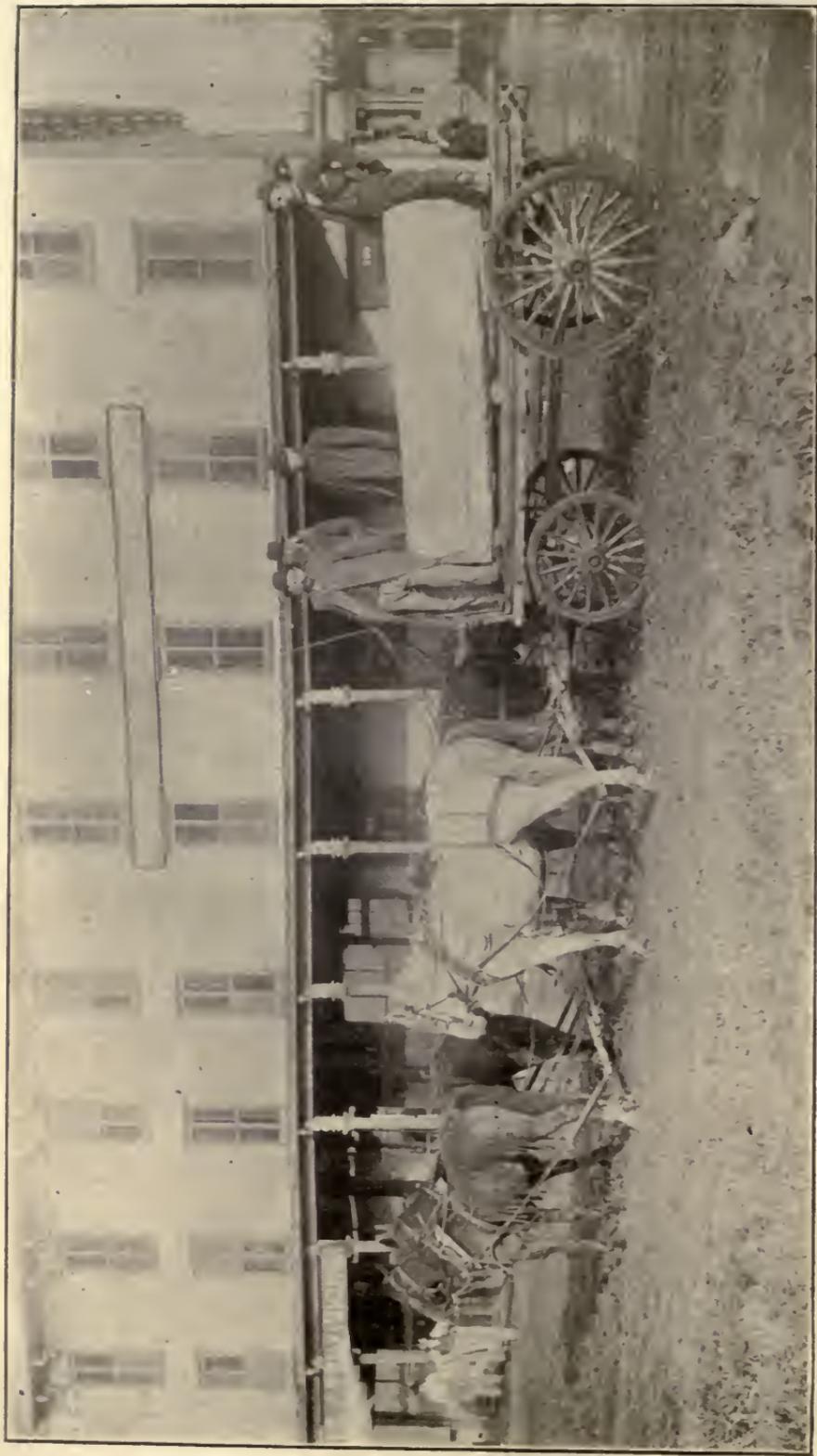
Erected by Surviving Members

And Descendants on the

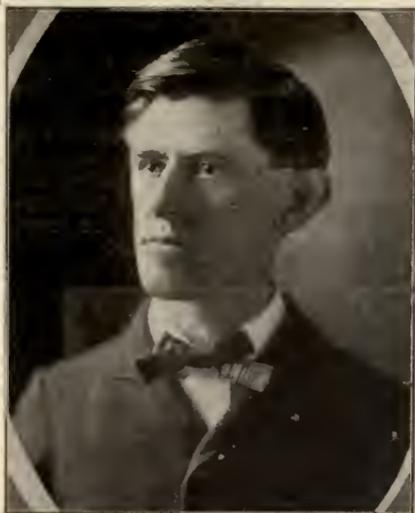
50th Anniversary,

September Twenty-Third,

1896.



Teams with Monument making the start from Galva to Bishop Hill, morning of September 19, 1896.  
John Root. George Snyder. Fred Otterstrum. F. M. Viox.



REV. AXEL GABRIELSON.



MASTER EARL ROOT.

Address of Welcome—Rev. Axel Gabrielson, Resident M. E. Minister,  
Bishop Hill.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, friends, one and all:

As the mouth-piece on this occasion of the corporate village of Bishop Hill its citizens, and those adjacent to it, who have had a part in arranging this celebration, let me in giving the address of welcome, first of all, in their behalf, express satisfaction at the sight here, greeting our vision, the assemblage of this vast concourse of people, from distant places and near, met to do honor to the day we celebrate.

But in the midst of the pleasure which such a scene affords, a feeling of sadness steals over us, as we reflect, that not many of the original founders of the Bishop Hill Colony remain today, after the lapse of half a century of time, to extend a greeting to you through a delegated medium or personally. Almost all of them sleep now in yonder peaceful city of the dead, or lie in the quiet shade of the distant woods, or rest, here and there one, in almost isolated graves.

Yet our hearts are cheered by the presence still of a few among us, and in the name of these remaining aged and honored veterans, I want to say to you, their descendants, to friends of long standing, and to those of more recent acquisition as well, gathered from near and far, welcome, yea, thrice welcome here today.

They have come, 'tis true, to only a small town, but now, as in the days of Bethlehem, the least of Judean cities, size, let me remind you, is not the only measure of greatness.

The Palestine city was not great because of its territory, or many inhabitants, but because it gave birth to One in whom all nations are blessed.

Our town, though small too in circumference, and insignificant as to population, and laying no special claim to distinction on the ground of having produced any one vying in greatness, even with mortal men, may still aspire to position among celebrated places, because, possibly, of her age in a comparatively new country, and certainly because, to brave men and women from the distant North-land, of Scandinavia, Helsingland Sweden, belongs the credit of the founding of this exceptionally quaint and unique town, on the wilds of an Illinois prairie, a half hundred years ago, and in its name Bishop Hill, the creation of this noble land of patriots, professed and sincere followers of the incomparable Bethlehemite, we greet you one and all, and bid you, welcome, among us today.

In behalf also of the young manhood and womanhood of Bishop Hill, who have shared none of the hardships of the pioneers of forty-six, forty-eight and fifty, but who today, consciously enjoy, in the heritage they possess, the fruit of the privations and labor of those heroes, living and dead. I bid all present here, welcome to the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Bishop Hill.

Yes, welcome to our home during your stay, and welcome to enjoy without limit, whatsoever of good with which a beneficent Providence has seen fit to bless us.

Again, in the name of all those whom I today represent; the movers in and promoters of the celebration enterprise, their committees, who have so faithfully and well performed every detail entrusted to them, the active energetic citizen, the retired aged, honored and loved among us, and the corporation itself, in the name of all these I extend to you all, from the least to the greatest inclusive, an earnest, sincere and warm welcome!



JOHN ROOT, OF GALVA, ILL.  
Born at Bishop Hill, October 25, 1849.

## Response—John Root.

Mr. Mayor and Fellow Citizens of Bishop Hill:—On behalf of the old settlers here assembled, and especially on behalf of those from abroad I desire to return to you my most sincere thanks for the cordial welcome you have extended us. We come here today from Puget Sound and from the Gulf of Mexico, from Chesapeake Bay and from The Golden Gate, from the East and from the far West, beyond the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. We come not as strangers, but as members of one large family holding a reunion at the old homestead. While many of us have been separated from the old home for more than a quarter of a century, the scenes and surroundings which greet us upon our return are familiar, and but few changes have taken place. The same broad streets lined with their beautiful maples, magnificent elms and drooping lindens—the same grand park, the same old church, the same old school-house, the same postoffice as of old, the same dwelling houses, and the same old bell with its familiar sound, that had its multiplicity of duties to perform; to call us to attend divine worship, to school, to dinner, and to sound the alarm in case of fire or other danger, and I am not certain but what it also did curfew duty.

As is well known the causes which led these pioneers, the founders of your town—these quiet law-abiding people—to forsake their native shores of the Scandinavian peninsula, with all the ties and traditions to which they were bound, and to seek for themselves and posterity a home in the land of the free, though in the unknown and uninhabited West, in this beautiful Mississippi Valley, was the religious persecution to which they were subjected. In all monarchies where Church and State are united, religious oppression, though varied in severity, is generally the rule, and with the exception of the instruments of torture, it is doubtful if these people were any the less oppressed than were the victims of the Spanish Inquisition. Where their mode of worship differed from the forms prescribed by the established church, or where religious services were held at different times or places, and by other persons than those prescribed by royal authority, they were harassed by the minions of the law, arrested, fined and imprisoned, until life became to them a burden, and so like the Puritans of old, they set sail for a more genial clime. Think of the sacrifices they made for their religious convictions; home and fatherland, the land of song and story; the land of the midnight sun; the land of Gustavus Vasa and of Gustavus Adolphus, the hero of Protestantism. All these associations and many more were held for naught, and they left all and embarked upon the high seas. Some of them in schooners and fishing smacks which would today be condemned as unseaworthy to sail on a pleasure lagoon within sight of a life-saving station. Tossed on the waves of the stormy Atlantic for three and four months, they finally landed in New York City, and by slow degrees, by stage route, canals and the great lakes, arrived at Chicago, then a village just entering her 'teens, and containing but a few thousand inhabitants. From there they continued their journey on foot across the country till they settled down on this beautiful spot.

It is conceded by all that this settlement at the time it was made was the advance guard, the entering wedge, to Scandinavian emigration to this great Northwest. They were to Scandinavia what the Independents and Puritans' were to England and Holland, and this stopping place may justly be called their "Plymouth Rock."

There had been earlier Scandinavian settlements on the eastern shores of this continent in New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania, but the spirit of adventure had not taken very strong possession of those settlers, and their descendants are still occupying portions of these States. A Scandinavian settlement is also claimed to have been made as early as the tenth century on the coast of what is now the State of Rhode Island, but the exact location has been somewhat shrouded in mystery and founded on tradition.

But Prof. Horsford, of Rhode Island, has discovered what he considers conclusive evidences of the site of their city, by the unearthing of its foundations, and has caused to be erected there a monument to commemorate the settlement. The city was called Norembege (presumably on account of the northern origin of its founders, and being probably in the same land discovered by Lief Ericson and called Vinland—the land of wine—on account of the profusion of wild grapes found growing there). We intend that posterity shall not be left in doubt as to the settlement of this place,

and have met today to dedicate a memorial tablet, to remain for ages as a reminder of the event.

Imagine, if you can, the condition of these people at the time of their settlement here; the trials they endured, the hardships they suffered—starvation and pestilence on every hand; settling down in the wilderness and marshes, full of malaria and miasma, in the bleak September days, when the sun was daily wending its way to the Southward, and gloomy winter coming on; with no means of subsistence except principally wild game, with which the country at that time abounded; with the nearest towns fifty to seventy-five miles distant, and to which periodical journeys had to be made for supplies, with horses and oxen as the motive power; with no habitation except tents and sod houses in which to pass the winter—surely the greatest wonder is that any one remains to tell the tale.

Then, as now, money was necessary for the carrying on of any enterprise, and among these people were found a few men of means, who converted their all into gold and expended the same freely for the benefit of the masses, even to the extent of paying the debts and passage for such as were unable to do so themselves, so that they could leave their country like honorable men.

Beginning with hoe and mattock to clear the forest and turn the sod for the next season's planting, the work was indeed laborious and would seem almost insurmountable. Yet, little by little, they acquired their land from the Government, and in less than 15 years, this village practically as it appears today, was built; for these people were imbued with the thrifty and industrious habits of their northern home, and among them were found architects and mechanics of every class and calling, necessary for the successful building up of a frontier settlement; and we have evidences before us on every hand of their industry and architecture. Every brick in these buildings was molded by hand, and every beam, joist, scantling and rafter built into them was hewed and sawed by these brawny men in these forests. Besides these structures that we see here, there were many more that are now obliterated, especially all the mills and dams on the banks of the Edwards. Flouring mills, both steam and water power, flax mills and saw mills, and included in the destruction was that grand obelisk, the chimney on the steam flouring mill, towering over 100 feet heavenward, and which would in all probability have stood for 500 years, and would have been a fitting monument for the admiration of coming generations, and of more memorial value to us than any block of granite we can erect today. But such are the mutations of time, and perhaps in another century some, or all of these remaining buildings will have shared the same fate. But yonder stands a faithful watchman and time keeper, remaining, which through summer's sun and winter's storm, by night as well as by day, faithfully proclaims another hour gone, never to return. Though not as elaborate in architectural beauty and mechanism as the clock in Strasburg Cathedral, yet at the time of its erection it was quite a curiosity and attracted strangers from all around, and on favorable occasions its clear tones can still be heard for miles, and it is not improbable that it will be on duty when the most of us shall have passed away.

In its most prosperous days this town, had it been enclosed by the Chinese wall, the inhabitants would almost have had within the confines of their own possessions, abundant resources to supply their every want without being dependent upon the outside world. They raised and manufactured into cloth their own wool and flax; made their own implements of every description; raised wheat and rye and ground the same into flour; manufactured leather and converted it into boots, shoes, and harnesses; burnt their own lime; raised horses, cattle, hogs and poultry, and their ten horse power sorghum mill was the largest in the northern part of the State, and very few of the necessaries of life were obtained elsewhere. Their industrial growth from the beginning was almost phenomenal.

These people have always been true to their adopted country and its flag, and while the rumble of approaching war was heard in the council chambers of the nation, a company of soldiers was formed and put in training under the military leadership of one of their number, and with their flint-lock muskets they met at regular intervals to perfect themselves in the manual of arms, and the whole town assumed a military aspect; and after Fort Sumpter was fired upon and it became necessary for volunteers to take the field in defense of the Union, no braver set of men



Steeple Building and Clock as it appeared in 1869.



Prize Flag Carried in a Parade at Bishop Hill.

ever faced rebel shot and shell than that small company that enlisted from your town; how well they were drilled is attested by yonder silk banner, now almost fallen into shreds, for which trophy the entire Regiment the Fifty-seventh Illinois Volunteers contested in a competitive drill, and Company D carried off the prize. Taking part in the battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, siege and battle of Corinth, Vicksburg, and many other engagements; sharing in that victorious march of the intrepid Sherman, which has been immortalized in song, "From Atlanta to the Sea." Participating in the grand review at Washington, they had then earned their full share of martial glory. Some of them failed to return, and many a father and mother, wife and child, sweetheart, sister and brother, looked in vain for the return of their loved ones; they lie buried today on Southern battlefields, with no token to mark their last resting place, while their memory is ever kept sacred by kindred and friends on each recurring Memorial Day, by crowning with garlands that arch dedicated to the memory of The Unknown Dead. Some of them are still with us, but their number is growing less as year by year rolls round, and by the end of another decade, very few of the old soldiers, or old settlers will remain.

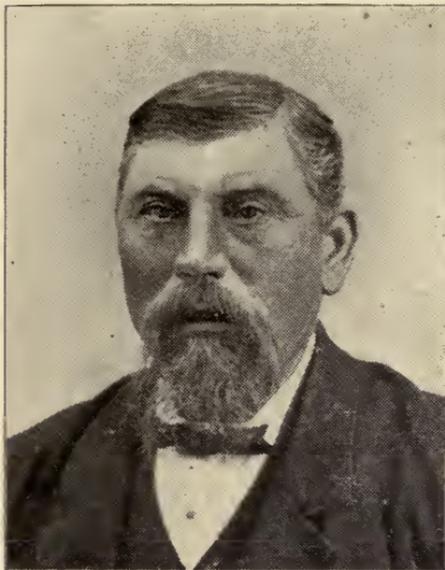
Your town today is provided with educational, religious, social, fraternal and benevolent organizations to such an extent that I doubt if another town of its size in the State of Illinois can equal it. First of all you have the public school, the foundation of all American educational institutions. You have churches and Sunday schools, Epworth and Junior Leagues, a Chautauqua Circle, Modern Woodmen, Home Forum, Select Knights and United Workmen, each and all doing good in their respective fields; and then you have a Voluntary Donative Society to look after the interests of the worthy poor.

In these days of steam and electric travel, telegraph and long distance telephone; when you can cross the Atlantic in less than six days; can travel between New York City and Chicago in twenty-four hours; can send a continuous message over 27,000 miles completely encircling the globe in less than twenty minutes, it would seem as if time and space had been annihilated, and it seems almost incredible to look back upon the last fifty years and see all the industrial, mechanical and scientific improvements that have been made on every hand since the first settlers set foot upon this soil. More material progress has been made in the world in the fifty years last past, than in any other two hundred, yes—four hundred years of its previous history.

And now my friends and fellow citizens, having come together on this beautiful September day—one of Nature's grandest and most glorious holidays—from all over this broad land, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of this romantic place, and for the renewing of "acquaintance almost forgot," I hope and trust that we shall all enjoy ourselves and feel the better for having met friends of long ago, and as time rolls round in its ceaseless whirl, may we ever refer to this day as one of happiness and joy, ever to be remembered. Again I thank you.



PETER  
JOHNSON,  
A BROTHER  
OF ERIC  
JANSON.



MARTIN JOHNSON.

CAPT. ERIC JOHNSON,  
57th Reg. Ill. Vol. Inf.  
Son of Eric Janson.

Address—Captain Eric Johnson, League City, Texas.

Fellow Colonists and Invited Friends:

We are met today to celebrate and commemorate the founding and first settlement of Bishop Hill Colony. These gray haired veterans—the survivors of the original colonists—need no address to remind them of the past—to them it is a living reality—they know all about it, and much more than I will be able to tell in the short time allotted to me. But the greater portion of this audience are their descendants, friends and neighbors who possess only a fragmentary knowledge of the past history of these colonists. It is principally them that I will address on this occasion.

That my hearers may fully appreciate the standpoint from which I view the past as well as the present, I will state that I firmly believe there is an overruling Providence that shapes the destinies of nations, peoples, and the individual as well.

Sacred and profane history, both ancient and modern, bear testimony to the fact that the exodus of people and nations have exercised great influence upon the religious, moral and material advancement of the human race.

The first exodus on record is where God commanded Abram to depart from Haran in these words: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land I will show thee." The second is the great exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. These two events were the preliminary steps in God's plan for the redemption of the human race.

May the 3d, 1607, was planted the first successful English settlement within the borders of these United States. It was made by the chevaliers of England, men and women of wealth and standing who came to the new world to embrace the enlarged field here offered to increase their wealth and power. From it sprang the civilization of the Southern States.

December 15, 1620, on Plymouth Rock, was laid the foundation of another civilization of men and women who fled from religious persecution to a land where they hoped to enjoy the blessings of religious freedom.

Fifty-one years ago these old Bishop Hill Colonists were living in their respective homes, in mountain dells, or in beautiful valleys, where meandered sparkling brooks and rivers, or on the borders of enchanting

lakes where interchanging groves of pine and birch enhanced the scenic beauty. A patriotic love of native country, the ties of kindred and childhood scenes, and associations held them in strong attachment to the native heath. No common or transitory emotion could have induced them to sever ties so dear and so sacred, and resolve them to turn their backs upon native land, old time friends and kindred and embark upon a voyage, months in duration, fraught with dangers now unknown.

In order to receive a full conception and appreciation of the causes that led to the exodus, we must go back several years in the history of these people to find the true cause.

History teaches that whenever and wherever church and state are united, true Christianity suffers and the church loses its spiritual power and becomes a mere dead formality. Sweden and its established church became no exception. The church had lost its spirituality, and its priests had become mere guide boards preaching perfunctory and formal sermons, which told the people the way to go without the least attempt to set an example of piety or purity in daily life.

In the thirties and early forties there passed through the provinces of northern Sweden a wave of religious awakening among the peasantry. It was not brought about through the agency of any revivalists. It seemed spontaneous, displaying a longing aspiration of the soul of earnest men and women, for the bread of eternal life and a desire to lead a life of devoted piety. They associated themselves together in groups without any formal organization, met here and there in private homes for the reading of the Scriptures and devotional exercise. Hence, they received the name of Lasare (readers).

How fitting it is that on this occasion we have the pleasure of having among us one of the leading pioneers in this religious movement, and perhaps the only living representative either in Sweden or America, of these original "lasare," who participated in this religious awakening before 1830, in the person of our revered and honored colonist, Rev. J. Olson, who, at the ripe age of nearly 94 years, has been spared to grace this commemoration of the results of the labors of early manhood. Nearly all of the leading colonists were identified with this religious awakening.

It is with delicacy that I must passingly refer to the part taken by my own father in this religious movement. Perhaps the over enthusiastic admirers of him may ascribe to him a greater share in the origin and growth of this movement that culminated in the emigration to America and the settlement of the Bishop Hill Colony than rightfully belongs to him.

When Eric Janson felt impelled by his religious zeal to visit Helsingland, he came to a field that had already been well cultivated. This venerable friend of ours and his able co-laborers had sown the seed and prepared the way for what followed. He came to friends who gladly received him. The reinforcement thus received and the impetus thus given to this religious movement by the fiery zeal and burning eloquence of the new

Young Old Settlers' Group, taken in the Park, September 24, 1896.

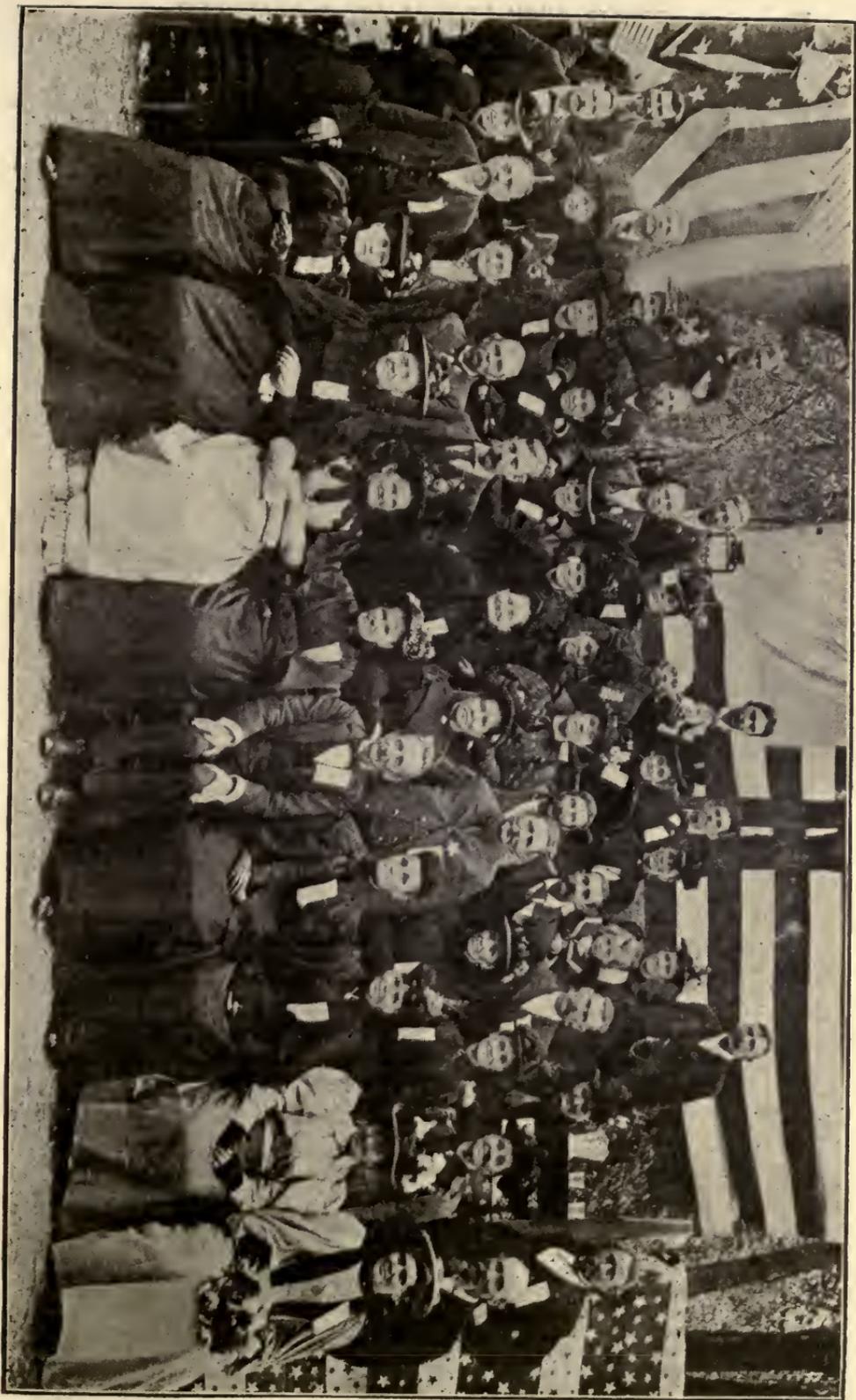
Top Row left to right—N. Soder, Jonas Lindstrum, P. J. Stoneberg, Axel Gabrielson, John Root.

Second Row—Olof Olson, John Soderquist, Mrs. Mary Soderquist, Jonas Olander, Jonas Headlund, Mrs. Mary Johnson, Peter O. Krans, Mrs. Lottie (Westberg) Holden, Mrs. Caroline Winroot, Mrs. Betsy E. Root, Master Earl Root.

Third Row—E. L. Swanson, Mrs. Jennie Swanson, Mrs. Martha Apलगren, Miss Hannah Chaiser, Mrs. Louise Myrtengren, Mrs. Elizabeth Barlow, Miss Emma Lind, Mrs. Pauline Lindbeck, Daniel Lindbeck, Isaac Blomberg, Geo. E. Troline, Mrs. Christine Blomberg, Eric Krans.

Fourth Row—Mrs. Mary Blom, Olof Krans, Mrs. Josephine Kingdon, Hon. Jonas W. Olson, Jacob Jacobson, Mrs. Kate Nelson, Mrs. Anna Peterson, Peter Johnson, Mrs. Christine Johnson, Mrs. Elizabeth Hallfast, Mrs. Anna Nystrum, Eric Nystrum.

Fifth Row—Mrs. Dr. J. F. Vannice, Mrs. Elizabeth Ericson, Mrs. Mary (Malmgren) Olson, Mrs. Mary (Jacobson) Johnson, Capt. Eric Johnson, Mrs. Matilda (Warner) Rutherford, Mrs. Kate (Bodinson) Harmon, Mrs. Elizabeth Berg, Miss Nettie Ericson.



co-laborer that had come among them, increased the number of converts and adherents to an extent that it alarmed the clergy of the established church. Measures of repression were deemed necessary, and forthwith commenced a persecution that eventually became so bitter and unrelenting that the adherents of the new faith became convinced that unless they relinquished their religious convictions, the government of their native land was powerless to protect them in their property or their lives. It was then, and not until then, that their longing eyes were directed to the great Republic of the West.

Thus in 1845 Rev. Olof Olson, brother of this venerable hero, and father of Hon. J. W. Olson, was selected as a trusted agent to select their new home in the New World.

The decision having been made to emigrate, measures were at once taken to carry it into effect, but at the very threshold they were confronted with a "condition"—an all important problem had to be solved. Two years or more of unrelenting persecution had cemented them together into a Christian bond of brotherly and sisterly love that was as strong as the religious faith in which they lived and breathed. But comparatively few were blessed with means, as the believers came from the peasantry and laborers in mines and factories, and the many were without sufficient means to defray the expenses of the long journey. It was in this trying emergency that those who were possessed of means sold their worldly possessions of both real and personal property, placing the proceeds thereof in a common fund. Thus all who were of one faith were enabled to emigrate.

Tell me not that mere human persuasiveness, or a mere religious enthusiasm could have persuaded so many to sell and divide the same with their fellow men. Here was presented a practical object lesson of the divine injunction, "love thy neighbor as thyself."

In Dalarlia, where nature reigns supreme in her august grandeur and solemnity and scenic beauty, lives a race of people celebrated in history for their heroic deeds of valor and unconquerable love of liberty and independence, and on more than one occasion have they saved the nation from a foreign yoke, when the rest had tamely submitted thereto. From this province came the most noted example of this self sacrificing love to fellow men. One of the wealthiest farmers of this province, one L. G. Larson, who sold his real and personal property at great sacrifice, with which he chartered a ship and gave to all his believing neighbors who were poor and unable to pay, a free passage over the ocean and clear through to their destination, and after arriving turned over into the common fund the remainder for the purchase of land and the necessities of life. His contribution to the common fund was over 24,000 crowns. Others followed in 10,000, 8,000 and lesser amounts.

When our Colonists had arrived in their new home one necessity pressed so closely upon another, that even had no pre-arranged plan been in existence, circumstances plainly indicated each successive step.

Habitations had to be provided for each successive installment of new arrivals. Food must be procured, provisions made for the future in the purchase of lands, horses, cattle, farm implements and seed. To have turned all loose to shift for themselves in a comparative wilderness, meant want and starvation to many, and in direct variance with the self-sacrificing brotherly love that brought them over, yea, it would have been heartless cruelty. Besides the religious zeal that had induced these Colonists to forsake fatherland and sever ties that were dear and sacred still burned with unabated glow upon their hearts' altar.

While singing praises of thanksgiving to their Heavenly Father for deliverance from religious persecution, and with gratitude glowing in their hearts that they were now in a land where they could worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, they went earnestly and cheerfully to work to fell the timber from which to build shelter for their families, to break the virgin soil and sow the seed that would bring forth the sustenance of life. They brought to the task before them an earnestness of purpose, strong and sinewy muscle, hardened and used to laborious work, on every hand and at every step they had to encounter and overcome trying and harrassing difficulties. The necessarily crowded condition in which they had to live, the then malarious climate soon made their bones ache, followed by the burning fever of ague attacks, stole gradually away

the inherent muscular strength brought from the fatherland. Yet, at times an insufficiency of food would try their spirit of endurance. Death came at frequent intervals to seek many a dear and precious victim, but under all their spirits were undaunted, their faith undimmed and the brotherly and sisterly love burned as brightly as ever. Peace and happiness reigned within our borders.

Then came the Asiatic scourge of 1849 which in a few weeks swept into the grave over one hundred of the very flower of the Colonists sending mourning into every family, but no sooner had the besom of death passed away than those remaining returned to the work of building up their new home and laying the foundation of future prosperity.

But the Colonists had still other ordeals and trials to endure.

Although a community founded upon the principles of peace and good will to all men, enemies arose on the outside who spoke all manner of evil against the Colonists, representing the community as a menace to the peace of the state. This the more readily received credence among outsiders who knew the Colony only from evil reports, because of the excitement caused in this part of the state by the then recent expulsion of the Mormons from Nauvoo.

Here was a colony of foreigners, speaking an unknown tongue, living so different from the rest of the world that suspicions were easily aroused.

Thus it can be seen how easy it was to incite the mobs that visited the colony during the winter of 1849 and '50. But thanks to the friendship and timely help of our nearest American neighbors who had come in closer contact with the Colonists, and had learned to appreciate them at their real worth, they arose as a wall of fire between us and our enemies, convincing the leaders of the mobs that they had been deceived as to the true character of the Colonists, and that we were good and desirable neighbors. Foremost among these, outside defenders, were Philip Mauk, John Piatt, Thomas Maxwell and Richard Mascal, and the Colonists and their descendants owe these men a deep debt of gratitude for the timely help in the hour of need.

Then in May, 1850, came the untimely death of the one who had been looked up to as the leader, which cast a temporary gloom and depression upon the Colonists.

The Colonists, however, undaunted in their courage, inspired by a devotion to the faith that bound them together in the bonds of Christian brotherhood, and had brought them across the wide waters to their new home, bent renewed energy to the work, and by degrees they overcame every difficulty and soon entered upon an era of prosperity.

Their landed possessions, the acreage under cultivation, the horses, cattle, swine, sheep, farming implements and other personal property increased year by year, and kind Providence blessed them with abundant harvests until finally the Bishop Hill Colony waxed strong and even wealthy, and the outside world pointed no longer the finger of scorn but of admiration.

But worldly prosperity does not always bring in its train unalloyed happiness.

Gradually that former Christian brotherly love commenced to cool off, the unity and oneness in religious faith began to waver. To sum it up in a few words the communistic life that had been born of the noblest impulses of the human heart and of pressing necessities, and had been a blessed bridge over an otherwise impassable chasm, had outlived its necessity and usefulness.

True it is that the moment the Colonists began to turn their thoughts towards a separation and individualization, the latent selfishness implanted in every human breast, that during the years of communistic life had been held in subjection, was now fanned into a flame, and hot and bitter at times, became the contests in our councils, until an amiable plan of division could be devised.

Fortunately, however, today, we old Colonists can all join in this festivity as perfect friends, and as brothers and sisters of one common household once more. Time has healed every sore, assuaged every disappointment, and we can each one of us take an unprejudiced and unbiased retrospective view of the past, and sincerely and truthfully acknowledge in our hearts that our then opponents were not always in the wrong, nor were we always in the right.

The time allotted me does not permit any further tracing of the growth and development of the Bishop Hill Colony, but fortunately what remains to be noticed is within the ken of all present, besides it will be the appropriate task for the historian of a future celebration. Suffice it to say that in the length and breadth of our great Republic, there is not a happier nor more prosperous community than Bishop Hill.

I cannot close my address without paying a well merited compliment to the founders of Bishop Hill for their happy selection of location. I have traversed thirty-seven states of this Union, together with a part of the Canadas, having passed through and visited numberless places of noted and acknowledged romantic and beautiful location, still I can truthfully say that for romantic and enchanting beauty of location, lacking those superlative adjuncts of scenic beauty—the combination of mountain dale reflected in the bosom of a mirror-clear lake—no town or city surpasses our own dear Bishop Hill.

Last but not least this exodus of the Colonists garnered from the provinces of Dalkarlia, Helsingland and Westmanland, noted in Swedish history for the home of a race of people with an unconquerable love of liberty, inherent purity of character, and unswerving loyalty to pure and noble principles, the best and choicest of their sons and daughters, transplanted them into the virgin soil of the fairest and choicest portion of the garden spot of the United States, and into the free and unpolluted air of the land of freedom, laying the foundation of a community thus specially selected, based upon self-sacrificing Christian and brotherly love to fellow man, tried and purified in the fiery furnace of persecution, privations and sufferings, that baffle all descriptions, which, as a natural sequence, has left its indelible stamp of character upon the existing community, which through decades and centuries to come will exert a mighty influence for good, religiously, morally, and politically, like its prototype, the pilgrims of Plymouth Rock fame.

Nor could I close without paying a passing tribute to the dead. The Allwise Father of us called you to your eternal rest before you were permitted to see the realization of your hopes and aspirations. But your unselfish sacrifice upon the altar of religious devotion and faith will live till time is no more, in the hearts of your descendants, being a heavenly inspiration to spur them on to live lives that shall make them worthy descendants of so illustrious parentage.

Now a word to the descendants of these old Colonists who may question the wisdom of their parents in sacrificing their all for the good of the many, if any such there be. This unselfish sacrifice of your parents was made through the noblest impulses of the human heart. It made it possible for one thousand souls to be transplanted to this land of religious freedom, where they and their descendants have become the heirs of a full citizenship in the best and freest government under the sun. Can you behold this lovely place with its hallowed associations and its happy homes, without exultant emotions that the act of your parents made it possible to exist? Is it not also a fact, with a very few exceptions, that the surviving heroes and their descendants who thus sacrificed their all have been blessed four-fold in their worldly possessions? Then where is the man or woman who would exchange his or her citizenship of this great Republic for one in our native land?

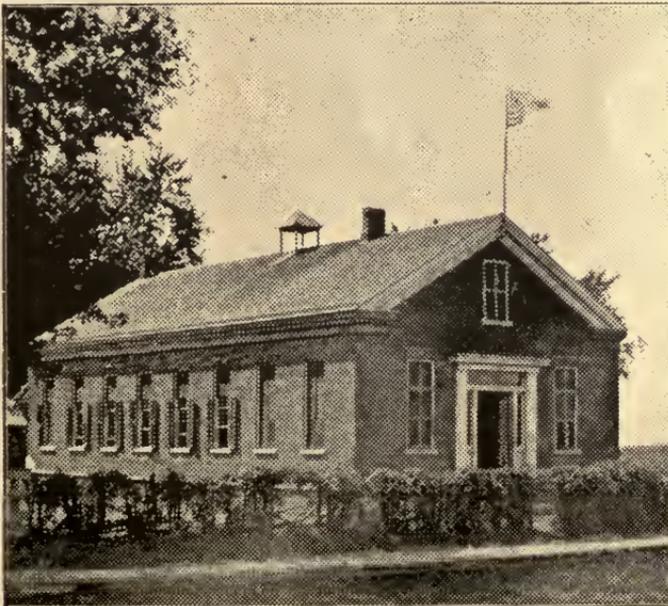
The skeptic mind will, perhaps, question my position taken at the outset that the hand of God was ever in the exodus of these Colonists; that the cause for which this sacrifice was made came to naught. Fellowman, remember that we judge human events from the limited vision of human eyes. For hundreds of years the exodus of Abram seemed barren of results. For forty years the meanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, to human eyes, appeared an aimless wandering in the desert. The results of the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock have not even today reached their culmination point in the influence upon the civilization of this grand Republic. Who can foretell what God, in His infinite wisdom, meant by shaping the destiny of our Bishop Hill Colony forefathers? Still, it has been far from barren of results.

Historians of great research and erudition, claim that the English speaking people owe a great part of their indomitable energy and aggressiveness to the Scandinavian blood flowing in their veins, and the cosmopolitan race now in its formative stage in the United States needed a new

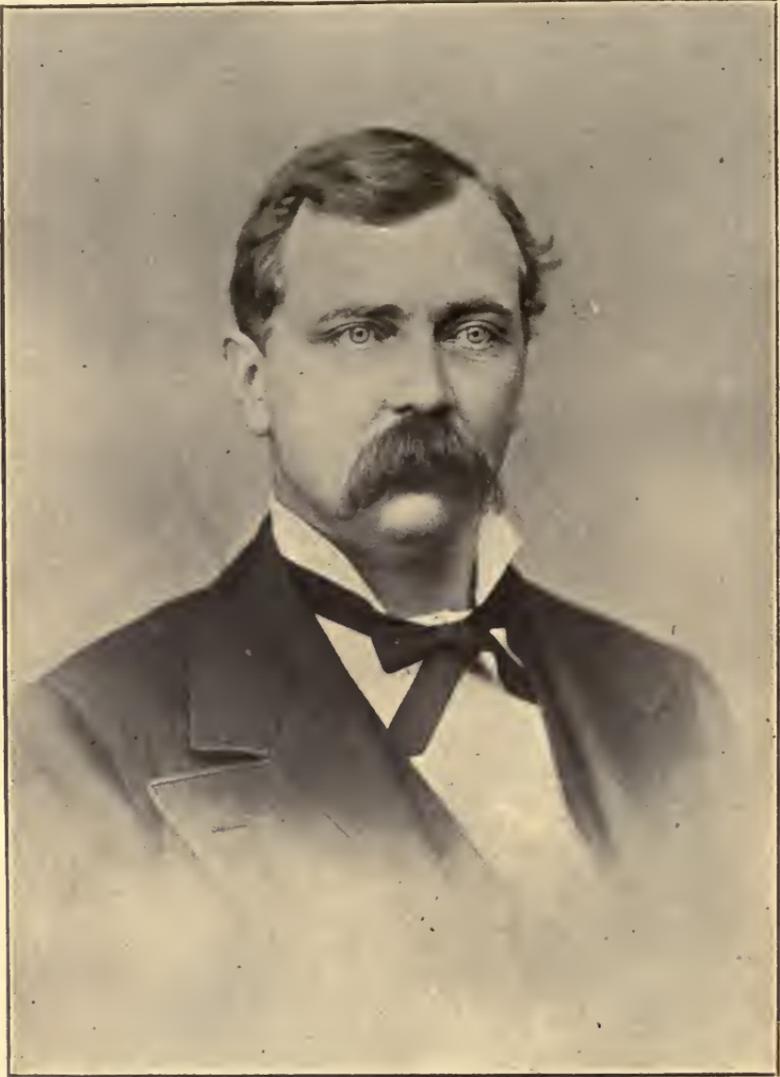
infusion of the same blood. Until the emigration of these Colonists in 1846, very few Swedes found their way to the shores of this great Republic, except now and then a struggling sailor who deserted his ship upon touching American shore. The commotion caused by the religious persecution and the subsequent emigration attracted attention to America, and thereby the Colonists became the pioneers of the immigration that swelled in volume with each succeeding year, until 1,500,000 Swedes have landed in these United States. They and their descendants have materially assisted in developing the resources of the great west, and are today exerting an influence that is felt for the good in the religious, moral and political advancement of our common country.

This exodus also conferred a great blessing upon Fatherland. It paved the way for the religious liberty that Sweden enjoys today, and it put a new religious life into even the established church.

In conclusion, we, who are yet among the living, have a sacred and exalted inheritance. Let us not lower the high ideal of Christian and brotherly love so strikingly exemplified in the early trials and experiences of these Colonists. Let no act of ours dim the luster of the glory of the past. Especially may the rising generation in whose hands will soon repose the future welfare and reputation of Bishop Hill, see to it that it will continue to be the nursery from which will be sent out to battle with the ups and downs of life, men and women of noble and exalted characters that will be a blessing to the world. May our cherished and beloved Bishop Hill be as worthy of its one hundredth anniversary as it was of its fiftieth.



SCHOOL HOUSE AT BISHOP HILL



Hon. Jonas W. Olson, of Galva, Ill.

**Hon. Jonas W. Olson.**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Citizens of Bishop Hill, and Visiting Friends:

It is with peculiar emotions that I greet this magnificent audience, assembled here to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Bishop Hill. I assure you that I esteem it a privilege and a great honor to be permitted to address this vast assemblage upon this commemorative occasion, though I feel that the duty has been better performed by others who have preceded me, and that there are still others who, on account of long connection with the Colony and personal knowledge of facts and incidents in its history, would be much better able to perform the task allotted to me.

Although my father, Olof Olson, came here in 1845, one year in advance of the Colony, and after exploring several states selected its present location, and it might appear from this fact, that I should have some per-

sonal knowledge of its affairs, and it was, as I understood, for this reason, in part, at least, that I was chosen as one to address you today. Yet, I am sorry to have to say that my own personal knowledge of events that transpired are extremely limited, as you will readily understand when I say to you that my parents, sister, brother and grandmother all died when I was only about three years of age, and I was, within three or four years later, taken away from the Colony, and have never returned to live here since.

All I know of my own knowledge is confined to a few youthful recollections that appear as a dream of infancy. I did not even know my own birthday, my own age, or the birthdays of my parents, sister and brother until I received the letter I hold in my hand, which I have recently received from Rev. Olof Norlin, the present pastor of the church at Soderala, Sweden.

The letter is written in the Swedish language and is a personal letter in answer to some inquiries I had addressed to the writer, but as I believe it will be of interest to some of the original Colonists from Soderala I will take the liberty to read it in the language in which it is written.

(Mr. Olson here reads the letter in Swedish.)

I will only translate and give in English so much of this letter as refers to the birth of my parents, sister and brother, myself and my aunt:

"Your father, Olof Olson, from Kingsta, No. 5, was born in Soderala May 16th, 1807; your mother, Anna Maria Westman, was born in Soderala, April 6th, 1809. Their children were, daughter, Beata, born in Soderala, December 22nd, 1836; son, Olof, born in Soderala, December 15th, 1838; son, Jonas W., born in Soderala, June 30th, 1843; your aunt, your mother's half-sister, Katrina Wilhelmina Petronalla Skoglund, was born in Soderala, July 16th, 1828."

Until I received the above letter, July 7th, the date given to me by my aunt from her recollection, was supposed to be my birthday, and had been celebrated as such by my children.

From what I have said, you will readily perceive that my knowledge of Sweden and of events connected with the Colony is mostly confined to what I have learned from tradition, through statements of surviving members, and through historical sketches and writings of others.

It appears that my father and his brother, Rev. Jonas Olson, that aged patriarch who still survives, and at the advanced age of 94, though too feeble to address us is with us today, had for some years prior to their emigration been engaged in a religious movement in Sweden whose adherents were known by the name of Lasare (Readers or Devotionalists), because they assembled in their private houses to hold their devotional meetings and read their Bibles assiduously in their homes.

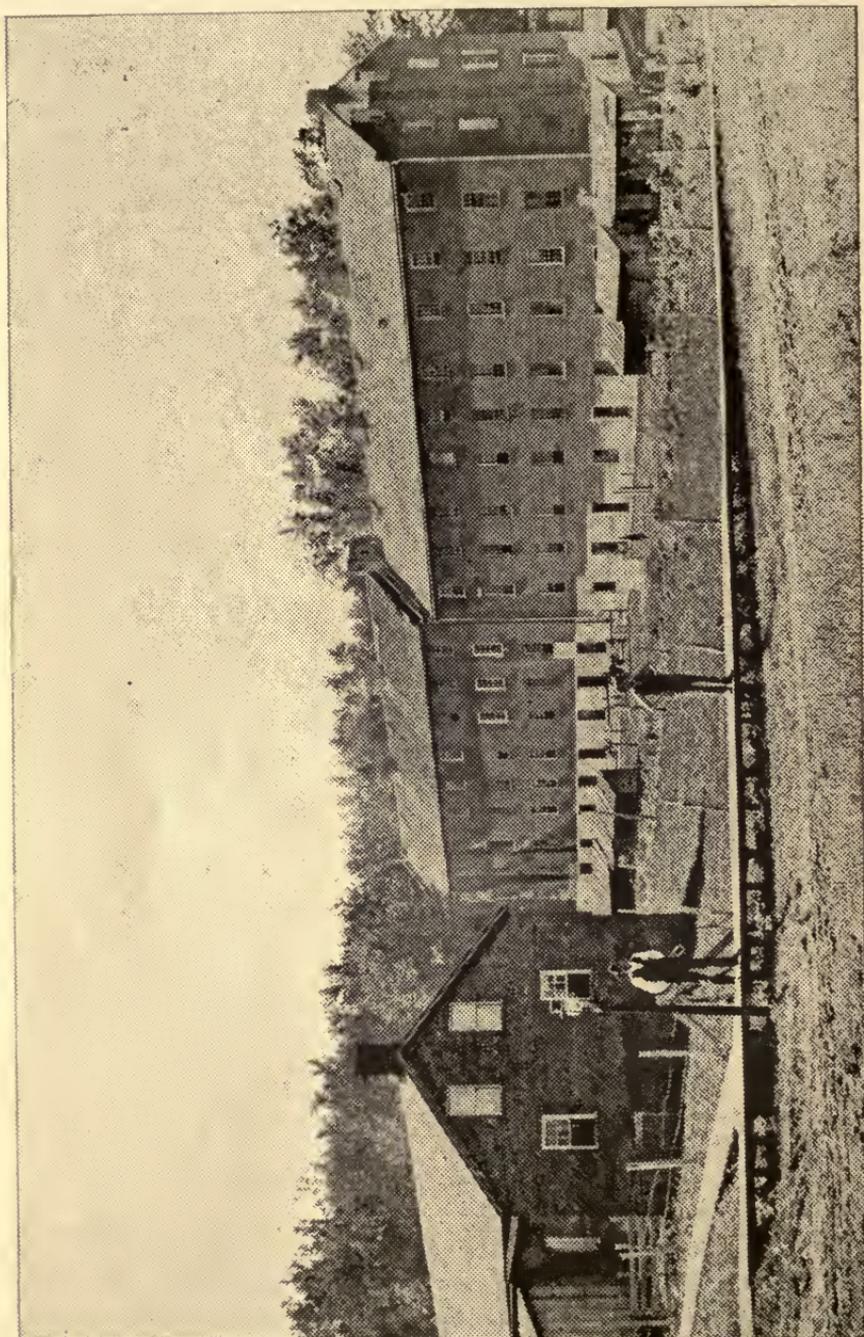
The Devotionalists were a sober, industrious and pious people who abstained from drinking, dancing, and other things deemed "worldly pleasures," which was tolerated among the adherents of the Established Church. Some of them discouraged the use of all devotional literature except the Bible, saying "that the best human writings are full of error and only tend to distract from the word of God."

According to Mikkelson's History the religious revival in Sweden which culminated in the emigration of the Colony, dates from the year 1842 when Eric Janson was introduced by Jonas Olson to the Devotionalists of Helsingland.

From this time Janson became the recognized leader in religious revivals and his teachings became known as Jansonism.

I quote from Mikkelson's Monograph:

"Jansonism and the form which it ultimately assumed was largely determined by the attitude of the established church. Eric Janson did not at first display separatist tendencies. He merely preached against rationalism and dead orthodoxy which was prevalent in the Swedish Church. He advocated a return to the simplicity and earnestness of primitive Christianity. He traveled from parish to parish conducting revival meetings. The number of his adherents was soon estimated from 1,500 to 4,000. The clergy (of the established State Church) became alarmed of a strong religious sentiment over which they had no control, and the import of which they did not understand. They regarded the Jansonists as a new sect holding doctrines that were subversive of the existing church organizations. In order to regain their lost power they denounced Janson from the pulpit. They attempted to refute his heresies in regard to devotional literature and



"Big Brick" Building. Basement used for kitchen and dining hall; upper stories for residence purposes. Bakery and Brewery Building in foreground, now used as a public hall, and where dinner was served during the Reunion.

the doctrine of sanctification. But Janson was gifted with a matchless power of debate, besides being well versed in Scriptures, and whenever it came to a battle of words was almost certain to come off victorious. The Jansonites were refused admission to the Lord's Supper. Eric Janson retaliated by saying there could be no faith without persecution; that there was no saving power in the sermon of an unconverted minister; and forbade any of his followers to worship in the established church, holding his conventicles (religious meetings) at the time of the regular church service.

"As the influence of Janson increased, so also the number and hostility of his enemies. His followers were subjected to abuse and insult of the rabble. Their meetings were disturbed, their houses pelted with stones, and their persons assaulted. But they praised the Lord who tried their faith by allowing them to be persecuted. They marched along the high-ways at night, and sang spiritual hymns, or gathered in front of the parsonages to pray for the conversion of their unregenerate pastors.

"In June, 1844, an event took place which gave the opponents of the new heresy an opportunity of adopting severe legal measures. Already since 1840 Eric Janson had witnessed against the abuse of devotional literature. The human writings of Luther, Arndt, Scriver and Nohrborg had usurped the place of the Bible. These new idols had stole away the hearts of the people. They must be destroyed.

"The burning of the books took place June 11. A great concourse of people from the country assembled on a farm near Tranberg. An immense bonfire was made of books, pamphlets, tracts—everything except the Bible, the hymn book and catechism (especially everything advocating, or excusing the union of Church and State). Amidst the singing of hymns and great spiritual exaltation, the assemblage watched the burning and destruction of the 'Harlot of Babylon.'

"The embers of the fire had hardly died, before the news spread to every quarter of Sweden. Two days later Janson was arrested and brought before the Court in Gefle. After a preliminary trial he was transferred to Westeras. He was finally released to await a new trial but was not allowed to return to Helsingland. In the meantime delegations of his adherents had visited the King and had been promised a hearing of their grievances before the proper authorities. Upon his release, Janson himself sought admission to the King, and was so graciously received that he wrote back to his friends 'I have triumphed at Court.' In September, 1844, he was summoned to appear before the Court at Westeras. In his defense he stated that the Church had abused its trust; that it had fallen from the true faith; that its servants were mere worldlings; and that he had a call from God to restore the true faith and show sinners the way to salvation. He was released.

"In the meantime the ardor of his adherents in Helsingland had not abated. Jansonism was being preached in every quarter. The re-appearance of the leader gave new impetus to the movement. His enemies had not been able to do him injury. The King and the highest secular authorities in the realm, it was claimed, were his sympathizers. It was only the hierarchy of the Established Church that sought his destruction. Full amnesty might soon be expected; the abominable machinations of the Church would be thwarted; the dawn of religious freedom was not far distant. So thought his confiding followers. His journey through Helsingland was one continued ovation. Everywhere the people flocked to the conventicles. In some parishes the churches remained almost empty.

"October 28, 1844, the second crusade against the religious books took place; this time in Soderala Parish. Janson was immediately arrested and was again released to await a new trial. Through the zeal of the inferior clergy he was arrested six times; three times released by royal orders; he was transferred from one court to another, but it is claimed he never received a thorough impartial investigation or fair trial. His followers were subjected to the same sort of treatment.

"The ancient and obsolete law against conventicles, adopted in 1726 against Halleian pietists and other heretics, was revived in all its severity.

"Jonas Olson and his younger brother, Olof Olson, were made to pay heavy fines for holding conventicles, or religious meetings without authority or consent of the established church. They were summoned before the House of Bishops in Upsala to answer for their religious opinions."

It is related to me that the last time that Olof Olson, my father, was

convicted, was for holding a religious meeting, at which he read to those assembled, the 11th Chapter of St. Luke, including the Lord's Prayer, at which he concluded his exhortation with the following quotation:

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come:

"Nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(The speaker also gave the above quotation in the Swedish language).

I am informed, but how accurate this information is I do not know, that according to the ancient and obsolete statute under which these persecutions were carried on, the final penalty in case of a further conviction would have been banishment and that to avoid being exiled he concluded to voluntarily leave the country and go to America in order that he might take his family along.

I again quote from Mikkelson's Monograph as follows:

"In 1845 he (Eric Janson) sent Olof Olson to America to examine the country and fix up a suitable location for the community. This was before modern Swedish emigration to the New World. America was then a name almost unknown to the peasants of Helsingland.

"In New York Olof Olson made the acquaintance of the Rev. Olof Hedstrom who is known as the founder of the Swedish Methodist Church in America. Hedstrom was stationed as a missionary among Scandinavian seamen in New York. He held services in a dismantled vessel (known as the "Bethel Ship") a part of which was fitted up for the reception of Olof Olson's family, consisting of a wife and two children, who remained there during the winter of 1845-6."

It will be noticed that there were only two children. The third, your humble speaker, who had been stricken with paralysis from which he never recovered, and which left him a cripple for life, was so sick at the time that it was not expected he could live, and being too ill to take along on such a journey, I was left to the care of my grandmother and my aunt, Catherina Wilhelmina Petronella Skoglund, to be brought over later with the Colony in case I should survive.

"Under the influence of Hedstrom, Olof Olson joined the Methodist communion, and presently proceeded on his way to Victoria, Knox County, Illinois, where he was hospitably received by Hedstrom's brother, Rev. Jonas Hedstrom. After a prospecting tour through Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota, Olof Olson wrote back to Sweden confirming previous favorable reports of the country, and recommending Illinois as the future place of settlement."

In this connection I have been informed by my aged uncle, Rev. Jonas Olson, that my father's first letter from America to him, came in care of the pastor of the Established Church at the Parish of Soderala, Sweden, who requested him to take a seat between himself and his wife and read the letter to them, which he did, but was considerably embarrassed when he came to that part of the letter wherein my father said that when they came to emigrate they should not worry about "Prestbetyg" (pastor's letter of recommendation), because the situation was understood and their persecution known here, and as there was no Established Church or Priestly aristocracy in America, the poorer the "Prestbetyg" the more cordial and hearty would be their welcome.

In July, 1846, Olof Olson was joined by Eric Janson, and together they fixed upon Henry County as the place to locate the settlement, my father having already purchased forty acres of land in Red Oak Grove, but a short distance west of here, which to this day is known as "Olson's field."

In the fall of the same year came the Jonas Olson party, among whom was my grandfather and aunt, who brought me over. I am told that the day previous to our arrival my mother had died. She had not yet been buried, and I do not know whether I remember seeing her or not; it seems to me that I have a sort of a dazed, hazy recollection of being ushered into the presence of some one dead, but whether I then knew that I was looking upon the face of my mother, knowing that it was cold in death, I do not know and cannot tell. If at the time of her death she knew that I was on the way, and so very near, that if her life could only have been spared another day she would have been permitted to see her unfortunate child once more, if only to greet him with a last parting glance expressive of

what no tongue can describe—a mother's love. I can imagine that as that sainted mother closed her eyes to the last sad scenes of earth, in her unspeakable anguish her last thoughts were probably to wonder what would become of her poor crippled boy. My father, sister, brother and grandmother all died only a few days later, and it seems so passing strange that of the entire family I should have been the only one to survive and be allowed the privilege of participating in the celebration of this Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Bishop Hill. The feelings that overwhelm me make me almost wish that the doctrine of the Spiritualists might be true. If disembodied spirits were permitted to look down upon the scenes of earth, it might be a consolation to that sainted mother to know that her then seemingly unfortunate child is thus honored, and that the people in this world with whom his lot has fallen have been so kind to him. \* \* \*

It is said that "While the orthodox devotionalists of Helsingland consisted chiefly of independent farmers and artisans, the Jansonists also included in their number a large proportion of miners, factory hands and poor people."

Many of these were unable to defray their expenses of a long journey, some were actually in debt, but their debts were paid and all admitted on terms of equality with those who were well-to-do, if not in affluent circumstances, some contributing as high as 24,000 kronor in gold.

They based their reasons for communism purely on scriptural grounds. "Their reading in the main being limited to one book, but in that book they found that the first Christian church took care of the poor and that material goods had been held in common." This action on the part of the wealthy members of the Colony certainly attested their sincerity.

About 1,100 were found willing to leave their native land with all the endearments of home and kindred, to escape persecution and secure religious freedom. The final parting is thus described:

"The emigrants gathered in Goteborg, Soderhamn and Stockholm, but by far the greatest number sailed from Gefle."

(Galva was intended to be a namesake of this latter city, but the tongue of our American friends was too thick to pronounce Gefle, and so it was corrupted to Galva).

The first vessel set sail from Gefle in the summer of 1846. For weeks previous to the departure of the vessel vehicles of every description came trundling into the seaboard city of Gefle. From a distance of over a hundred miles pedestrians came travel-stained and footsore. A feverish excitement reigned. No one wanted to be left behind. It was a sad parting. Families were torn asunder, children left their parents, husbands left their wives, the mother left her infant in the cradle. It was the flower of the youth that went, principally young men and women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. Their friends never expected to see them again."

Knowing that many of you, who, like myself, are descendants of the Colonists, yet know nothing of the Fatherland, except as it is described by others, I shall take the liberty to repeat to you a description from one of the world's most famous descriptive travelers, Paul B. Du Chaillu, as given by him after he had lived in Sweden and Norway many years, and traveled more extensively perhaps than any other man ever traveled in that country. I also repeat it that we may be better able to appreciate the sacrifices the members of the Bishop Hill Colony made when they were practically driven into exile from such a land:

"There is a beautiful country far away toward the icy North. It is a glorious land; with snowy, bold, and magnificent mountains; deep, narrow, and well-wooded valleys; bleak plateaux and slopes; wild ravines; clear and picturesque lakes; immense forests of birch, pine, and fir trees, the solitude of which seems to soothe the restless spirit of man; large and superb glaciers, unrivalled elsewhere in Europe for size; arms of the sea, called fjords, of extreme beauty, reaching far inland in the midst of grand scenery; numberless rivulets, whose crystal waters vary in shade and color as the rays of the sun strike upon them on their journey toward the ocean, tumbling in countless cascades and rapids, filling the air with the music of their fall; rivers and streams which, in their hurried course from the heights above to the chasm below, plunge in grand water-falls, so beautiful, white, and chaste, that the beholder never tires of looking at them; they appear like an enchanting vision before him, in the reality of which

he can hardly believe. Contrasted with these are immense areas of desolate and barren land and rocks, often covered with boulders which in many places are piled here and there in thick masses, and moorlands, all so dreary that they impress the stranger with a feeling of loneliness from which he tries in vain to escape. There are also many exquisite sylvan landscapes, so quiet, so picturesque, by the sea and lakes, by the hills and the mountainsides, by the rivers and in the glades, that one delights to linger among them. Large and small tracts of cultivated land or fruitful glens, and valleys bounded by woods or rocks, with farm-houses and cottages, around which fair haired children play, present a striking picture of contentment. Such are the characteristic features of the peninsula of Scandinavia, surrounded almost everywhere by a wild and austere coast. Nature in Norway is far bolder and majestic than in Sweden; but certain parts of the coast along the Baltic present charming views of rural landscape.

"From the last days of May to the end of July, in the northern part of this land, the sun shines day and night upon its mountains, fjords, rivers, lakes, forests, valleys, towns, villages, hamlets, fields, and farms; and thus Sweden and Norway may be called "The Land of the Midnight Sun." During this period of continuous daylight the stars are never seen, the moon appears pale, and sheds no light upon the earth. Summer is short, giving just time enough for the wild-flowers to grow, to bloom, and to fade away, and barely time for the husbandman to collect his harvest, which, however, is sometimes nipped by a summer frost. A few weeks after the midnight sun has passed, the hours of sunshine shorten rapidly, and by the middle of August the air becomes chilly and the nights cooler, although during the day the sun is warm. Then the grass turns yellow, the leaves change their color, and wither, and fall; the swallows and other migrating birds fly toward the south; twilight comes once more; the stars, one by one, make their appearance, shining brightly in the pale-blue sky; the moon shows itself again as the queen of the night, and lights and cheers the long and dark days of the Scandinavian winter. The time comes at last when the sun disappears entirely from sight; the heavens appear in a blaze of light and glory, and the stars and the moon pale before the aurora borealis.

"Scandinavia, often have I wandered over thy snow-clad mountains, hills, and valleys, over thy frozen lakes and rivers, seeming to hear, as the reindeer, swift carriers of the North, flew onward, a voice whispering to me, 'Thou hast been in many countries where there is no winter, and where flowers bloom all the year; but hast thou ever seen such glorious nights as these?' And I silently answered, 'Never! never!'

This country, embracing nearly sixteen degrees in latitude, is inhabited chiefly by a flaxen-haired and blue-eyed race of men—brave, simple, honest, and good, and probably the most independent, honest and faithful of the European nationalities.

They are the descendants of the Norsemen and of the Vikings, who in the days of old, when Europe was degraded by the chains of slavery, were the only people that were free, and were governed by the laws they themselves made; and, when emerging from their rock-bound and stormy coast for distant lands, for war or conquest, were the embodiment of courage and daring by land and sea. They have left to this day an indelible impression of their character on the countries they overran, and in which they settled; and England is indebted for the freedom she possesses, and the manly qualities of her people—their roving disposition, their love of the sea, and of conquest in distant lands—to this admixture of Scandinavian blood, which, through hereditary transmission, makes her prominent as descended chiefly from Anglo-Scandinavians and not Anglo-Saxons.

"We will now travel from one end of this land to the other, crossing it many times from sea to sea, over well-made roads and wild tracts, in summer and in winter, and linger among its people."

When the Jansonites were aboard, and the vessels about to leave the shores of Scandinavia, I am told they sang a song and every eye was filled with tears. I do not know what song they sang, but can imagine none that would have been more appropriate or expressive of their feelings than the language of Frithiof when he was exiled. I will ask my American friends to pardon me while I repeat these verses in the original Swedish. (Here Mr. Olson recites the verses in Swedish. The audience



Old Settlers Group. Taken in the Park September 24, 1896.

was visibly moved and applause greeted the recitation.) Nineteen attempts at translation have been made, but none have succeeded in preserving the beauty, feeling or pathos, of the original. I will now read to you what is said to be the best translation into English:

"Thou front of creation,  
Exalted North!  
I have no station  
On thy green earth.  
Thy lineage sharing  
My 'pride doth swell.  
Thou home of daring!  
Farewell, farewell!

Farewell thou royal  
Valhalla-throne!  
Thou night's-eye loyal,  
Midsummer sun!  
Thou sky unclouded  
As hero's soul!  
Thou vault star-crowded!  
Farewell, farewell!

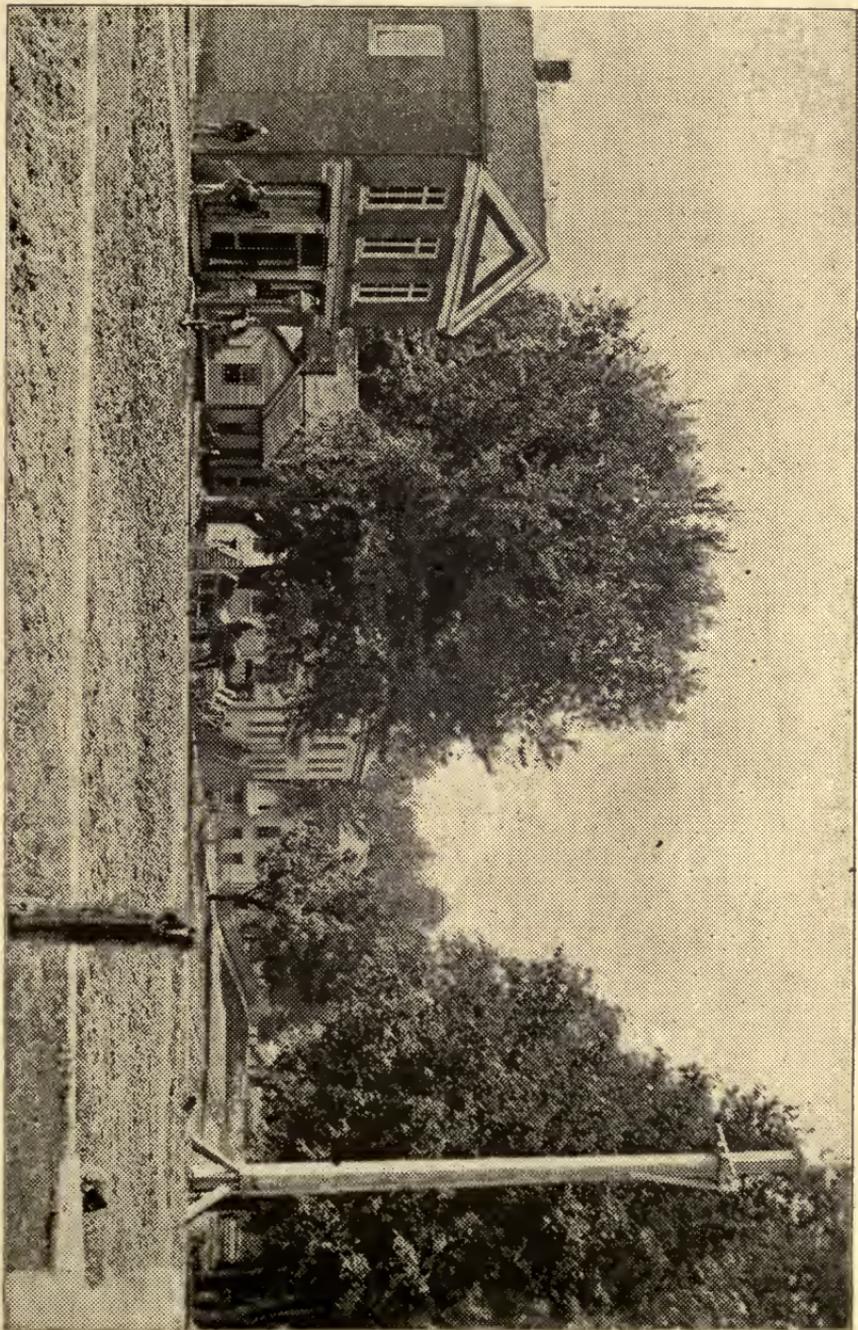
Ye mountain ranges  
Where honor dwells,  
Creation changes  
Your rune-face tells.  
Ye lakes and highlands  
I knew so well,  
Ye rocks and islands,  
Farewell, farewell!

Farewell ye grave-mounds  
Where the linden showers  
Near azure wave-bounds  
The dust of flowers!  
But time revealeth  
And judgeth well  
What earth concealeth,  
Farewell, farewell!

Farewell ye bowers,  
Beneath whose shade  
So many hours  
By brooks I've played;  
Ye friends of childhood,  
Ye meant me well,  
I love your wildwood;  
Farewell, farewell!

My love is cheated,  
My home is burned,  
My shame completed,  
I'm exiled, spurned.  
From land appealing  
To ocean's swell,  
Life's joyous feeling,  
Farewell, farewell!"

Their homes had not been burned, but they had been pelted with stones and every other indignity heaped upon them. It seems strange that there should have been found in such a country and among such a people, those who would persecute for opinion's sake as these Colonists were persecuted. But no more strange than appears the burning of witches in New England, or that there should have been found among the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, those who tolerated laws to inflict capital punishment for the impossible crime of witchcraft.



Post Office Building in Bishop Hill. Looking West on South side of Park.

The authentic history of nearly every nation begins with an emigration, and the cause of emigration is usually persecution or unfavorable condition of the emigrant in his native country. In the dim vista of the past, beyond all history and spoken of by tradition only, this transfer of peoples from their native soil has been the course of empires.

It has been said that, "Though all written memorials may have perished of the vast processions which moved thousands of miles through centuries of time, they can be traced back over space and time by words indicating process and implements of primitive and universal industries, or war, or family relations which are the common property of races that now seem almost diverse."

Great civilizations are those which are the most cosmopolitan, and those nations, as a rule, are the least progressive whose population is the most unmixed and exclusive. China may be cited as an example.

There has not been on earth within historic times, so far as I can call to mind, one single great civilized nation of unmixed blood.

The Englishman is Celt, Anglo-Saxon, and Scandinavian, through immigration and conquest. The Frenchman is Celt, Roman and Goth. The American is an intermixture and a compound of nearly all nationalities of the earth. The United States of America is the greatest Republic in the world, and to be one of its worthy citizens, native or naturalized, is one of the greatest privileges of earth.

A large share of this greatness is due and traceable to the sterling character of its Colonists.

There can be no doubt that one cause of this, our adopted country's greatness, is to be found in the amalgamation of diverse races and nationalities that first colonized and peopled it. These considerations give great importance to occasions like this.

It is of no little moment that the descendants of a great people, who are destined to assist in forming a still greater race, are able to point to the very spot in this great Mississippi Valley, where is to be found the foundation head, the source of that affluent of Scandinavian blood which is making its way into that great stream of humanity which, like the great river, broadening and widening as it goes, receives its tributaries of many lands as it flows majestically through the heart of this great continent.

While our interest, our hopes and aspirations as well as the hopes and aspirations of our children are now all identified with this, the land of our adoption, and while we are Americans all, we yet have a lingering love for the land of our birth, that spot where we first saw light, and we point with pardonable pride to the universally conceded fact that the Swedish character yields to that of no other nation in those traits which enable a people to form a new and great State; enterprising, hardy, independent and thrifty, with such thrift alone as industry, economy and honest toil can give, lovers of freedom and valiant in its defense, the Swedish people, whenever they have appeared in history, they have done so with honor and renown.

The name and fame of the great Gustaf Vasa, who escaped from imprisonment and was afterward hunted like a wild beast, when he was concealed among the peasants of Dalarne, is known throughout the world, as is also that of "Gustaf Adolph," and that great statesman of his age, Axel Oxenstjerna.

Strange that amid all the horrors of thirty-five year war in which Sweden was engaged, Gustaf Adolph should have found time to engage in the formation of a Colony, and yet we learn that in 1626 a charter was granted to a company of Swedes to form a Colony in the New World, in which the King pledged himself the sum of \$400,000, to the stock of the enterprise, and that in the following year a few emigrants came over.

The distractions of the terrible war delayed the establishment of this Colony, but it is said that the project was ever present in the minds of this illustrious King, and that only a few days before his heroic death at the battle of Lutzen, he declared it to be the "Jewel of his Kingdom."

After his death the Great Chancellor Oxenstjerna, under Queen Christina, carried out his design. The Charter was renewed and finally in 1638 a Colony of Swedes and Fins landed upon the banks of the Delaware. The adjacent country became known as New Sweden. The Colony was united, prospered and maintained its independence during a period of about seventeen years, when, on account of the impoverished condition



Old Settlers' Group. Taken in the Park on the 60th Anniversary, September 23, 1906.

of Sweden, growing out of the 30 years of war, the infant Queen Christina was unable to protect her possessions in this country, and New Sweden was annexed to the possession of the Hollanders, and eventually passed under the supremacy of William Penn.

It is said that the records of this first Swedish Colony are few, but entirely to the credit of the Colonists, and that one fact deserves special mention. The Colonists of other nations were slave-holders. Slavery had been almost universal on this hemisphere. In the Charter of this Swedish Colony, however, the great Swedish King wrote, "The Swedish Nation is laboricus and intelligent, and surely we shall gain more by a free people with wives and children." It thus appears that the first edict against slavery on this continent was by a Swedish King and the last by an American President. The first by the great Gustavus Adolphus; the last by the martyred Abraham Lincoln.

Swedish representatives sat in the first legislature convened by William Penn at Philadelphia in 1683, and assisted in framing the thoroughly democratic constitution of the Colony.

In less than a hundred years later the Swede appears conspicuously in the struggle for independence as the champion of American liberty.

The name of Axel Fersen and his comrades in arms should never be forgotten by the American people. When France sent her chivalrous soldiery under the leadership of LaFayette and Rochambeau, to aid the young Republic in its struggle against the oppression and tyranny of Great Britain, among the most gallant and courageous soldiers were those of the Royal Swedish Regiment in the service of Louis the XVI. Its Colonel was Axel Fersen, who afterwards distinguished himself for his daring attempt to rescue Marie Antoinette from her fatal captivity. This regiment of Swedes under the eye and in the presence of Washington, shed its blood upon the last battle-field of our Revolutionary war, at Yorktown, and there saw the flag of England lowered and the independence of the United States assured.

The number of Swedish Colonists on the Delaware river appears to have been something over 900, and it is interesting to note that their numbers appear to have been about or nearly the same as the members of the Bishop Hill Colony.

The names as given in the list of original members of the Colony of New Sweden clearly indicate their nationality but many of them have since become so corrupted or changed as to lose all trace of their Swedish origin, as for instance Hendrickson was changed to Henderson, Kyn to Keen, Jokom to Yocum, Bonde to Boon, Jonasson to Jones, etc.

To many of the descendants of the Colony of New Sweden the language as well as the names of their ancestors have been lost. They have become so intermingled with other nationalities and the whole so thoroughly Americanized that it would at this time be impossible to tell how many of the citizens of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and other eastern states owe their origin to these early settlers on the Delaware river, but certain it is that these people have played an important part in forming the character and shaping the destinies of this country.

Communication between the descendants of the Swedish emigrants to New Sweden and the Fatherland, and emigration from Sweden to this country had practically ceased long before the members of the Bishop Hill Colony, the persecuted "Lasare," of Helsingland and Westmanland began to cast about for a new home to which they could flee from their persecutors.

The advent of this new Swedish Colony was the beginning of a new epoch, the opening of a new tide of Swedish emigration numbering according to the last census almost a million Scandinavians, who, together with their immediate descendants, are now almost as numerous as the present population of Sweden.

The advent of the Bishop Hill Colony in 1846 opened up a new tide of Swedish emigration unheard of before, which has peopled the state of Illinois and the entire Northwest with prosperous Swedish homes and flourishing communities.

As any history of the United States which fails to mention the Swedish Colony of New Sweden must be incomplete, so a complete history of Illinois and the great Northwest cannot be written with the name of Bishop Hill Colony left out.

It should not be forgotten that the Bishop Hill Colony in Henry County, Illinois, were no less lovers of liberty than its prototype on the Delaware.

I understand that the first vote in this country of the Swedes of Bishop Hill was unanimous for the Democratic party but when the question of human slavery became an issue in politics, they voted almost unanimously with the Republican party, because that party was then the most radical in its opposition to slavery and it has been said of them "that they were as true to the principles of liberty as the magnetic needle to the north pole."

When the war of the Rebellion broke out no citizen of this country was more loyal to the flag and the cause of the union than the members of the Bishop Hill Colony, none more ready to rally to its defense and offer themselves if need be as a willing sacrifice upon the altar of the



ERIC FORSSE,  
Major 57th Reg. Ill. Vol. Inf.

bleeding country of their adoption. No soldiers from this great state displayed more courage, fortitude and valor than did that Swedish company from Bishop Hill—Company D, 57th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers.

Another fact I wish to mention. There stands in Lincoln Park at Chicago a monument to Linnaeus, "the King of Flowers," an honor to the Swedish people of this country. A former citizen of Bishop Hill, perhaps more than any other man, is entitled to the credit of procuring the erection and completion of this monument.

While speaking of the achievements of the Scandinavians of this country, I must not forget to make honorable mention of that illustrious Swede who, through his inventive genius, came to the rescue of the cause of the Union, and in the darkest hour saved the United States navy from destruction and perhaps some of its principal cities from capture, a man who was an important factor in saving the union; a man who died in his adopted country, but whose remains were claimed by his native land and whose dust now sleeps in the bosom of his own mother earth, his memory honored alike in the land of his birth and the home of his adoption—need I mention his name—John Ericson, the inventor of the Monitor.

The Scandinavian race has also excelled in story, in song and saga as well as in war, statesmanship, poetry and science.

The name and fame of Jenny Lind, Christīna Nilsson and Hans Christian Anderson is known throughout the world.

As faint glimmers of the "Northern Lights" of Scandinavia may be seen in other countries so the genius of this people from the land of the midnight sun has illuminated other lands.



ERIC U. NORBERG,  
at one time Secretary of the Colony.

Historical Sketch—Philip J. Stoneberg, Bishop Hill.

(From the Swedish original, translated and revised.)

Let us turn back in history to the earlier half of this century and give a look at the condition of religion in central Sweden.



REV. JONAS OLSON.

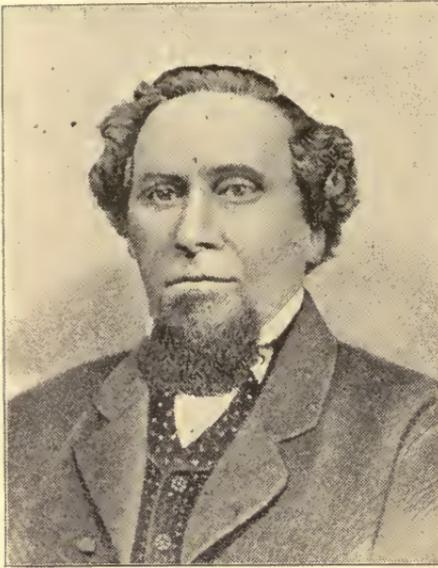


JONAS KRONBERG.



OLOF STONEBERG.

THREE OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE COLONY.



OLOF JOHNSON.



JACOB JACOBSON.



SWAN SWANSON.



JONAS ERICSON.

FOUR OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE COLONY.

A darkness, so to speak, envelops the Established Church. Here and there—almost everywhere—the social life is stamped with intemperance. Priest and layman are neither better. Dancing, swearing, and card playing belong to the order of the day.

But here and there, nevertheless, a light is shining in this dark night. A few have obeyed the Lord's voice and have forsaken the ways of sin. The bible or religious writings are studied in private or in meetings. These burning lights are the "Readers" or "Devotionalists."

Thus Devotionalists were found in Soderala parish, South Helsingland, as early as 1825. Among them were Jonas and Olof Olson, who were especially active in this work. Then there lived a few in Ofvanaker parish, while in 1837 a revival took place among the youth of Alfsta, but the result was only temporary; among the awakened was Andrew Berglund. In Norrala, Bjuraker and elsewhere, Devotionalists were found as time went on.

But another Devotionalist may be particularly mentioned. Born, December 19, 1808, in Biskops Kulla parish, Uppland, he was converted in the morning of life; for he was 26 years old when, as if through Providential intervention, he was healed from certain physical ailments and came to feel a deep religious sprit. Through love for the brethren this "reader"—Eric Janson—went to visit "readers" in South Helsingland. He was then living in Osterunda parish, Westmanland. The year following, 1843, he as a tradesman, took a load of flour and went northward. In Soderala he stopped over Sabbath with Jonas Olson. With him he attended a devotional meeting. At the next meeting Eric Janson made a stirring talk to the people assembled. He proclaimed that the bible is the only true guide to salvation, and for a religious life. Further journeys were made to Helsingland. One of these was to Hudiksvall when Janson visited Forssa parish. His success as a revival preacher was great.

In 1843 Janson moved to Forssa parish, from whence Olof Stoneberg moved to Osterunda, Westmanland. Meantime the revivals continued. Several men who were fluent speakers addressed the gatherings. Not a few laid aside their everyday work temporarily and made trips to other parishes. All these people were now called Jansonists, since Janson had been instrumental in starting this religious awakening.

Opposition arose on the part of the Established Church because the teachings of Janson were looked on as disturbing. Janson maintained that salvation implies full cleansing from sin and the acquiring of peace. He regarded the bible as the one book which should be read to give light on eternal things.

Janson's declaration regarding devotional books was not without its results. On June 11, 1844, many books were burned in Alfsta. In October a pile of books was burnt in Soderala; while books also were consigned to the flames the same fall in Forssa.

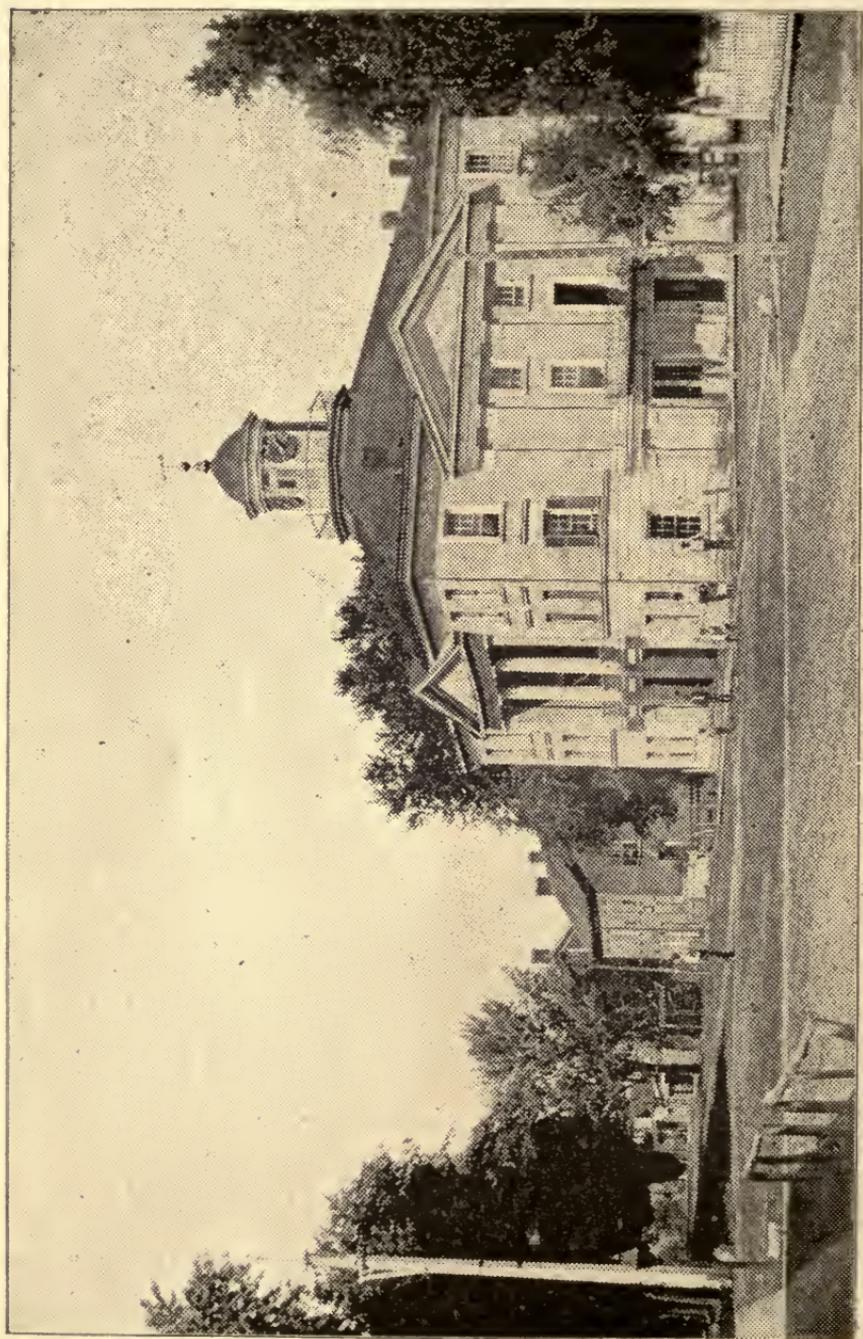
The days of arrest and prison-confinement were at hand. Janson was taken on June 13, 1844—two days after the burning of books in Alfsta—and hurried to Gefle prison, thence to Westeras. Through a petition to the King he was freed. Four men went to Stockholm and after considerable difficulty received an audience before the King, who said that on their arrival home Janson would be free again. When freed, Janson himself, with a companion, went to the King, who asked him: "Do you desire mercy?" "No, I desire justice," was the reply. When about to go out it was found that the door could not be opened, but the King led them out a back way—a sign, as it were, of how Janson was to one day leave his native country.

He was arrested in November and transported to Gefle to be tried for insanity; but he was released and ordered to Upsala to be "warned for delusions." On December 22 he was taken in Soderala to Gefle prison, where he was till April 18, 1845, when he was released through petition to the King.

If Eric Janson had to suffer, his followers were likewise subjected to fines, blows and imprisonment. Much could be said about this, but we must confine ourselves to relate only a few of such occurrences.

In the summer of 1844 a certain number of persons had to appear before the court at Thorstuna on account of complaint of the Parish Priest at Osterunda, and pay fines.

On December 18th, the same year, Jonas and Olof Olson were sued to appear at Upsala to answer for their religious belief. In Gefle they were arrested for preaching, but released when their destination was made known. Through the assistance of Justice Henschen they were enabled to call on the King at Stockholm, who promised to help. On their arrival at Upsala the two brothers were not fairly treated. After returning home, Jonas Olson was arrested on New Year's eve, taken to Gefle and placed among prisoners whom he, as a crown official, had formerly assisted in convicting. He was released in a few days.



Steeple Building and Clock as it appeared in 1896.

In Soderala it happened that Olof Olson read at a small gathering the Lord's Prayer, and something from the Scriptures. For this he was fined 100 crowns and 10 crowns for "Sabbath breaking." In Osterunda parish, Olof Stoneberg was reading from the bible Sunday afternoon, May 12, 1845, at a gathering at a neighbor's house. A mob came, entered the room and severely bruised the reader, while others also received blows.

About 11 o'clock on the night of August 17, 1845, the Parish Priest in Osterunda, with a few other men, broke into a dwelling place and behaved unseemly. Their object was to search for Janson.

A prayer meeting was being held in Forssa parish, on June 24, 1845, under the leadership of Eric Janson. The sheriff, the priest and a large mob came, too. Their purpose was to arrest Janson. As the sheriff stood on the steps from which Janson was speaking, he was pushed down by a plucky woman. Janson stepped down, went through the crowd and with a few companions made his escape to Soderala parish.

For fifteen weeks Janson was concealed from the public. Thirty crowns were offered for information as to his whereabouts. Then the priest in Delsbo parish sued Janson to appear at the court there for "blasphemous utterances." Janson finally agreed to go to Delsbo which he did with a friend. The judge saw no cause for imprisonment; but because of the great hostilities toward Janson it was decided to confine him for life in Gefle prison.

While Janson was being taken to prison, there appeared four men on the highway; one stopped the horse; another cut the reins; a third threw the driver's cloak over the latter's head and held him; the fourth took Janson from the prison-cart. Janson was then concealed in the parishes of Bollnas, Vaxna, Ofvanaker, Alfta, Mora and Malung. A journey was thereupon made over forests and mountains to Christiania, Norway. Here, in January, 1846, under an assumed name, he left with a few for America.

That Sweden was not ripe for the Jansonists is apparent from the persecutions referred to. There was no longer any hope for them to enjoy the privileges of the Established Church. Besides, they were denied the right to witness in courts. Thus but little was left for them in Sweden.

Some adventurous Swede had once in a while traveled to America. Already in 1845 Olof Olson had gone to America. In New York he enjoyed the friendship and hospitality of Rev. O. G. Hedstrom in the "Bethel" Ship. Olson was later recommended to Rev. Hedstrom's brother, Rev. Jonas Hedstrom, of Victoria, Illinois.

The time Janson had passed in imprisonment and isolation had not been lost. A hymn-book was written; also a catechism. These were printed with great risk to the printers.

Janson made a plan for the emigration. As it occurred in the apostles' days so should it now occur. Janson appointed certain men, who should receive all monies into a common fund, for the communistic society it had been decided to form. Property was sold and money obtained. As much as 24,000 crowns came under Gabriel Larsson's name from Malung. Others again were poor, whose debts were paid, besides their passage.

It was found that about 1,100 people were ready to emigrate. But the emigration was not to take place without difficulties. Passports were denied the people, and it was only through a petition to the royal authorities that everything was made clear. Nor did the emigration take place without the exemplification of Scripture. Husband and wife were parted; children from their parents; parents from their children. Sometimes no well uttered farewell was spoken—in the dead of night family ties were unceremoniously severed. Friends, relatives parted to meet no more on earth.

A voyage on the sea was not so inviting in those days as now. The ships were small and inconvenient. But of course the many Swedish emigrants had to put up with the conditions existing.

The first shipload of emigrants that left Soderhamn suffered shipwreck and the voyage was repeated later.

One ship at one time, another at another, left port, either at Soderhamn or Gefle or Stockholm or Goteburg. A stop was usually made at Copenhagen, whereupon the course was directly to New York. The num-

ber of emigrant passengers varied. One ship might have 150, another 75, while a third about 50. The time the journey took was long, usually about three months. One ship was five months on the way, including a stop in England for repairs. One ship, with about 50 emigrants, was lost on the sea; another suffered shipwreck on the American coast.

From New York the journey was made up the Hudson river to Albany and thence on the Erie canal to Buffalo; next on the Great Lakes to Chicago. From Chicago the greater number went on foot, while wagon transportation was secured for the luggage, with which a few aged ones and children might ride.

Eric Janson and some others had been a few weeks at Jonas Hedstrom's at Victoria, when a company of emigrants from Malung parish arrived. A few weeks more were spent there. On August 1st Olof Olson had purchased for \$250, of a settler in Stark county, 40 acres on section 9, and 20 acres on section 17 in Weller township, Henry county. On August 21st there were bought for \$1,100, 156 acres on section 8. Hither then—to Red Oak Grove—went Janson, Olson and the other immigrants. Here were log houses, wheat to harvest, and a few cattle.

A good place to establish the colony was found on section 14, on a certain hillock, where was a spring, a small wood at hand and a little creek.

Eric Janson bought 160 acres on this section, September 26. On the same day were purchased from the government for \$400, 160 acres on section 24, and 160 acres on section 23.

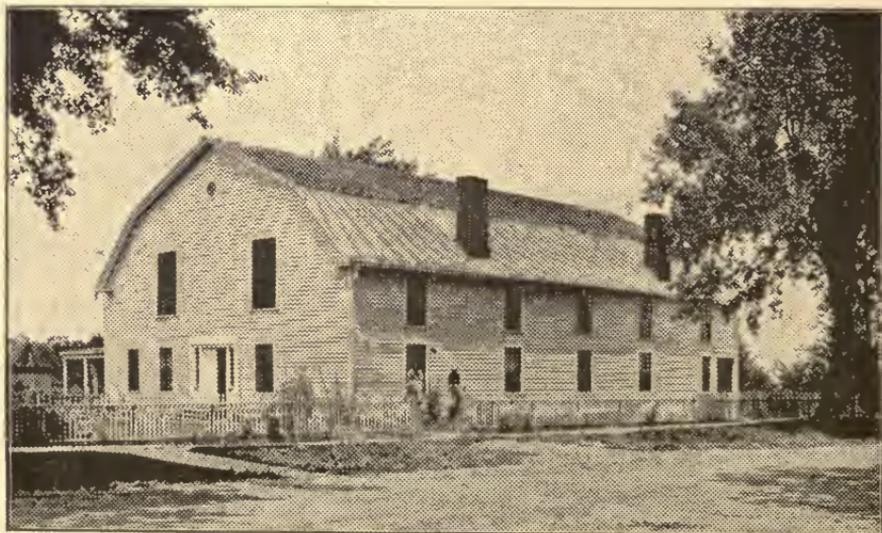
Thus was Bishop Hill begun, named after the parish that gave Janson birth.

A few log houses and dug-outs were here when more emigrants came. Some of these emigrants came first to Red Oak Grove, then hither. More dug-outs were made until in time they were over a dozen in number; into them the fall rains crept as well as other unpleasant things.

Diseases came. In Red Oak a number died because of the changed climate and food. A monument is today standing in Red Oak to the memory of 50 who died in '46-'47. During the winter of '47 there died 96 in Bishop Hill, of whom 11 perished of the measles.

Yet, amid such circumstances, the praises of Zion were sung. A tent-church was raised in the fall of '46, in the form of a cross. It seated 800 persons. Every morning Janson called the people to morning prayers.

In the spring of '47 arrived those immigrants who came to New York the previous fall, when the canals were frozen. However, a score of men came overland in the winter to construct an earthen wall.



Church Building. The meeting house is in the upper story.. The pews are of solid walnut.

Besides the log houses and dug outs, a few houses were built of sod, some of which served as kitchens. In '47 the first frame house was built. Since the tent-church burned down, accidentally, services were held in the woods until the new church was erected in 1848. Several who had lived in dug-outs now moved into the dwelling rooms in the lower stories of the church.

In time the industries increased. The cultivation of flax was taken up in earnest. Of the flax crop of '47 there were made 12,473½ yards linen. The next year there were woven 4,129 yards of carpeting and 12,454 yards linen. In '51 the zenith was reached, 31,579 yards of woven goods were produced. From beginning to end, that is, from '48 to and including 1860, 169,386 yards of woolen goods were manufactured.

More land was bought in '47 and '48. On October 19, 1849, Eric Janson bought of Robert D. Foster, for \$3,000, 1,116 acres of land in and around LaGrange, now Orion.

In August, 1849, the Asiatic cholera was introduced by a few Norwegians. A child of six months died, thereafter grown persons. Protection was sought at other places, among which was LaGrange. But on came the uninvited guest. At LaGrange 70 died. There, today, a gravestone marks their resting place. After three weeks the pestilence ceased, but many a one over the hundred mark was gone.

In 1850 more emigrants came from Sweden. On Lake Michigan a number died of cholera; of 37 who came from the district of Angermanland only 7 reached their destination. From Chicago emigrants now often went on to Henry by water.

In 1847 adobe was manufactured. But in '49 brick-making was carried on. 100,000 bricks were made the first month. After the cholera the work was resumed, 10,000 to 12,000 being made daily.

The first grinding of flour was on hand-mills. Then two grist mills were built, one run by water and one by wind. In '49 work was begun on the big steam mill, which had a capacity of 100 barrels a day.

In March, 1849, a company went to California to seek for gold. The company numbered Jonas Olson and eight others. They reached their destination in August, after a journey of over 2,500 miles.

But while a few were in California to seek gold, and others in Sweden to bring emigrants, a cloud came over the colony. The voice of the leader was hushed one day, and that forever here. Yet, not before its owner, Eric Janson, had preached his last sermon on the text: "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." The 13th of May came and went. The leader's remains were laid away; but the great God was alive and went about.

After Janson's death, his wife, Sophia Janson, authorized Andrew Berglund as responsible for the leadership of affairs.

The successor of Berglund was Jonas Olson, who had returned home in February, 1851.

Since the land was owned in the names of different individuals, and since certain privileges could be obtained through a charter, such a document was obtained January 17, 1853. The Colony was organized with seven Trustees in whose names all Colony property was vested. The Trustees were Olof Johnson, Jonas Olson, Jonas Ericson, Jacob Jacobson, Jonas Kronberg, Swan Swanson and Peter Johnson.

May 6, 1854, a set of By-Laws were adopted; all those persons who, in course of time, signed them, numbered 526.

In 1854 the Colony performed much labor at Galva in building operations; much work was also done for the C., B. & Q. R. R., then under construction.

At the annual meeting, January 22, 1855, it was reported that the Colony owned the following: 8,028 acres of land; 50 town lots in Galva, valued at \$10,000; ten shares of stock in the Central Military Tract R. R., valued at \$1,000.00; 586 head of cattle, 109 horses and mules, 1,000 hogs, and other assets such as wheat, flax, broom corn, provisions and general merchandise.

In 1858 the Colony numbered 655 males and females, of whom 147 were males over 20 years; 258 females over 20 years; 78 males and females between 15 and 20 years; and 172 males and females under 15 years of age.

On January 10, 1859, Peter Johnson (who was a brother of Eric Jan-

son) resigned from the office of trustee. In his stead Olof Stoneberg was elected.

In December, 1859, a Colonist wrote to a friend in Sweden: "We have, in general, had a healthy season; no deaths since August last year."

In 1860 the Colony built the last brick building—the school house. Interested in education, Eric Janson had early secured instructors in English for the benefit of the Colonists. The school was maintained each year. It was suitable, therefore, to end with the building of a school house—a contribution to enlightenment, as Jansonism had been to religious freedom.

On February 14, 1860, the Colony was divided into two parties—the Jonas Olson party with 265 shares, and the Olof Johnson party with 150 shares; the Johnson party divided up its holdings the following year among its members, while the Olson party underwent further subdivisions before its property was individualized.

The shortness of time and other reasons prevent a full historical sketch on this occasion. Various matters have been omitted.

A few words in retrospect:

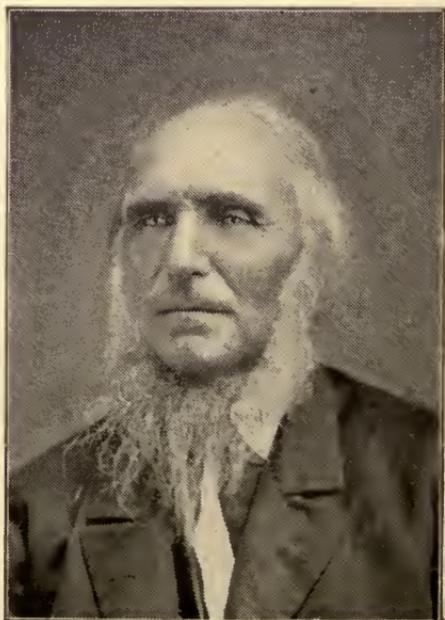
What did Jansonism and the Bishop Hill Colony accomplish? The former was undoubtedly one of the means which helped to give Sweden religious freedom; it also helped to break the ice for a great emigration of the people of the North to the United States.

The Bishop Hill Colony was built when Chicago was a town, and Peoria on the east and Rock Island on the west, were small places. The influx of Swedish property, together with Swedish energy and will, made the Colony a significant factor in the progress of Northern Illinois.

But we cannot point out all that Jansonism and the Bishop Hill Colony have done—eternity alone will make it clear.



ERIC BERGLUND, Baltimore, Md.  
 First Lieut. Co. D, 57th Reg. Ill.  
 Vol. Inf. Graduated at the head  
 of his class at the Military  
 Academy at West Point in 1869.  
 Was instructor at the Academy  
 during administration of Presi-  
 dent Hayes. Now a Major re-  
 tired U. S. A.



REV. ANDREW BERGLUND.

### Historical Facts of the Bishop Hill Colony.

Martin Johnson, J. Helsen and myself were assigned to this work. This we find a difficult work as there does not appear that any record was kept in the early days of the Colony. No record seems to have been written till the years 1853-54, when the Charter and By-Laws were granted by the Legislature.

We have not been able to ascertain who was the author, but Mr. N. Heden presided as Chairman and E. U. Norberg as Secretary.

Those that have attempted to write a history of the Colony have had to rely on this and the memories of the oldest living settlers.

Schooling in those days was very rare, only a few had this opportunity.

We find Kelt & Company wrote a history of Henry County about 23 years after the first settlers of Bishop Hill. They give a short history of the Colony.

We find that in the year 1880 Captain Eric Johnson published a book called "Svenskarna of Illinois." It gives a chapter as a history of the Bishop Hill Colony, a reliable account of the origin in Sweden, the persecution, emigration to this country, the toils and sufferings of the early days. In 1881 he published the "Swedish Citizen" in Moline, Illinois. April 16, same year, he has a list of the births, as well as the present residences of the Charter members.

Capt. Erik is a son of Erik Johnson, founder of the colony. This history is accurate and reliable.

We find Mikel Mikelson, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, in 1892, wrote a history of the Colony, largely copied from Erik Johnson's. He gives vent to a bitter denunciation of the management of the Colony.

We find that Philip Stoneberg, a student of Knox College, born and raised at the Colony, is writing a history of the Colony, which we believe is well written in Swedish language.

Erik Johnson and his followers in the year 1845-56, opened an emigration to this country, the United States of America, to thousands of Swedes to this land of religious liberty, where men can worship the God of Heaven, as their consciences dictate without any persecution. This Fiftieth Anniversary is to us more than an ordinary event; our mind goes back to the early days of toil and suffering, strangers then in a strange land, living in tents and dug-outs. Improper food and exposure were attended with fearful mortality. The scourge of Asiatic cholera was brought in by emigrants in the month of July, 1849. About 150 of our strongest men and women died in a few weeks. A person at noon, healthy and strong, would lie a corpse at sunset. Peace to their dust.

Though they sleep, 'tis not forever,  
 There will be a glorious dawn,  
 We shall meet to part no never,  
 On the resurrection morn.

From the deepest caves of ocean,  
 From the desert and the plain,  
 From the valley and the mountain,  
 A countless throng shall rise again.

Though they sleep, 'tis not forever,  
 In the lone and silent grave,  
 Blessed be the hand that taketh,  
 Blessed be the hand that gave,

In the bright eternal city,  
 Death can never, never come,  
 In His own good time he'll call us,  
 From our rest to that sweet home.

The original number that emigrated were about 1100; the adult Charter members were 454, of this number only 99 are alive to-day; of the seven Trustees, two are alive. They are Swan Swanson and Jonas Olson. Mr. Olson is now in his 94th year and will take part in this reunion.

August 2, 1846 the first piece of land was bought on section 8, Weller township. Shortly after 160 acres were bought for \$1100.

Together with a log house and some growing corn, this corn was about all we had to live on through the winter of 1846-'47.

The log house, first building owned by the Colony, was moved to section 13, Weller township, and occupied by John Bjork, now deceased.

We leave the subject here now to our descendants. Whence came you and whither are you going?  
N. RUNQUIST.



MRS. CHARLOTTE L. ROOT.

Who was a first cousin of Eric Janson, was born in Osterunda, Sweden, May 22, 1824, and came to Bishop Hill in 1846.. Died at Galva, Illinois, February 22, 1905.

## BIOGRAPHICAL.

President John Root made a model presiding officer.

Below we give brief sketches of the lives of the Colonists whose portraits appear elsewhere in this paper.

Rev. Jonas Olson was born in Sweden, December 18, 1802. He came to the Colony in 1846. He was one of the most prominent men in the Colony affairs and succeeded the Prophet, Eric Janson, on the latter's death. He is now very feeble but was present during the reunion.

Andrew O. Bergland was born in Sweden January 10, 1814, and died in Bishop Hill, August 17, 1896. He left Sweden in October, 1846, and was shipwrecked on the North Sea. He was rescued and remained in England till January, 1847, when he sailed for New York. He arrived in New York in March, and in Bishop Hill three months later. He was one of the Colony preachers. One of his sons, Major Eric Bergland, is now an officer in the U. S. Army.

Jacob Jacobson, formerly of the firm of Swanson & Jacobson, was born in Sweden, March 18, 1817, and died at Bishop Hill, December 15, 1883. He held a prominent place in the business affairs of the Colony and was superintendent of the "Ox Boys," with whom he was very popular, for a number of years. He arrived in Bishop Hill in February, 1847, having traveled the distance from Toledo, Ohio, on foot.

Swan Swanson was born in Sweden, May 28, 1825. He came to Bishop Hill in November, 1846. He was prominent in the later Colony affairs and served a number of years as post master of the village, and as township treasurer. He was engaged in a general merchandising business, in partnership with Jacob Jacobson, from 1861 to 1873.

Martin Johnson, who succeeded Rev. Jonas Olson as preacher in the Colony church, which position he now holds, was born in Sweden, April 9, 1831. He arrived in Bishop Hill in September, 1846. He served as Justice of the Peace a number of terms, and also as Supervisor and treasurer of his township.

Olof Johnson was born in Sweden, January 30, 1820, and died at Galva July 18, 1870. He came to the Colony in 1846, and was made business manager and financier of the Colony. He returned to Sweden in 1849 and raised \$6,000 for the colonists. He was a man of great executive ability.



MRS. MARY (MALMGREN) OLSON,  
The first child born at Bishop Hill.



OLIVER HEADSTRUM,  
of Victoria, Illinois.

Jonas W. Olson was born in Soderala, Sweden, June 30, 1843. He was the son of Rev. Olof Olson, the founder of the Colony. Mr. Olson is the present post master of Galva. He served a term in the Illinois legislature and was the Democratic nominee for Congress in the 10th Illinois District in 1894. He is an eloquent speaker and an able politician.

Hon. Eric Johnson, son of the Prophet, Eric Janson, was born in Bishop's Kulla, (Bishop Hill) Sweden, fifty-eight years ago. His early life was spent in the Colony here on the farm. He has been quite prominent as a journalist and publisher, served for a time as captain during our Civil War, was elected to the House of Representatives of Nebraska. His present home is League City, Texas.

#### Notes of the Reunion.

Rev. Jonas Olson is now the oldest living representative of the Colonists. He will be 94 years old next December, but was able to attend the exercises in the Park last Wednesday, in an invalid's chair.

Peter Wickblom and N. G. Hollander were the next oldest people in attendance. They are both nearly 87 years of age, but notwithstanding his age Mr. Wickblom gave an interesting talk on Thursday afternoon.

The whole park was illuminated with Chinese lanterns on Wednesday night.

Peter Johnson and Lars Ericson are the only ones now living in Bishop Hill who came over with the very first of the Colonists, having arrived here in July, 1846.

The old Colony bell which was used in the exercises last week, and now in use as a school bell, is very nearly as old as Bishop Hill, having been purchased either in 1847 or '48.

The excellent photographs for the portraits and views in this edition were made by E. J. Vannice of Bishop Hill.

Over two thousand people were fed free by the hospitable Hillites on Wednesday and Thursday and there was "any quantity" of provisions left.

In the "Steeple Building" two rooms were devoted to relics. Quaint old plows, spinning wheels, coffee mills, lanterns, grain cradles, etc., were there, each labeled with the name of the owner or donor. A quaint old gun was on exhibition, the barrel of which had been used by a soldier in the army of Charles the XII, now in possession of Eric Anderson. A wedding coat of N. G. Hollander, made in Sweden in 1835. A beautiful hand made linen table cloth, with raised figures, by Mrs. Christine Olson.

Mrs. N. Runquist of Galva, who was present at the reunion, was twenty weeks on the ocean and lay seven weeks on the dock at Liverpool waiting for the ship to be repaired.

The Swedish flag used in the decorations about the grand stand in the park was made for the occasion by the ladies of Bishop Hill. They were unable to procure one in Chicago.

Olof Krans is entitled to much credit for the faithful reproduction of old Colony scenes in a series of large paintings. The first dugouts were reproduced, principally from memory and measurements, in one painting. Then there were field scenes of planting, harvesting, pile driving, etc. It was a very interesting collection and deserves, and will no doubt have, a place with a permanent collection of relics, records and souvenirs.

Thursday's meeting was given up to reminiscences and short talks. The meeting was called to order by the ringing of the Colony bell at 10:30 o'clock. A number of letters were read which had been received from former residents of Bishop Hill, and who are now located in all parts of the United States, expressing regret at being unable for various reasons to attend this reunion. There were letters from California and Oregon, Massachusetts and New York, as well as points nearer home. Rev. A. T. Westergreen, of Geneva, Illinois, gave a very pleasing address, followed by John Helsen, after which free dinner was announced for everybody at the Auditorium, the older ones being given first place. After dinner short addresses or talks were given by Eric Bengston, Peter Wickblom, Dr. J. F. Vannice, Martin Johnson, and J. W. Olson. The program was plentifully interspersed with music by the chorus and male quartette.

After the meeting was over all the old members of the Colony present were photographed in a group by E. J. Vannice and a very good picture secured.

There were present from a distance: Walter Bjorklund, Davenport, Iowa; Nelson N. Florine, Britt, Iowa; John W. Strom, Moline, Ill.; Mr. and Mrs. Frenell, Alpha, Ill.; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hawkinson, Moline, Ill.; Mr. Christine Bandholtz, Osco; Mr. and Mrs. Gustof Chilstrom, Orion; Mrs. Kate Hultman, Davenport, Iowa; J. A. Nye, Chicago, Ill.; Mrs. D. Chilstrom, Orion, Ill.; E. B. Severin, Moline, Ill.; Mrs. Catherine Nelson, Peoria, Ill.; Nellie C. Nelson, Peoria; Mrs. Kate Harman, Central City, Neb.; Mr. and Mrs. I. V. Hoar, Rock Island, Ill.; Capt. Eric Johnson, League City, Texas; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Wickstrom, Galesburg, Ill.; Mr. and Mrs. S. G. Anderson, Davenport, Iowa; Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Berggren, Galesburg, Ill.; Mrs. F. A. Olson, Galesburg, Ill.; S. J. Swanson, Galesburg, Ill.; J. E. Norling, Chicago, Ill.; Nels Soder, Madrid, Iowa; Mrs. Anna Peterson, Genoa, Ill.; Andrew Chaiser, Chicago, Ill.; A. P. Hanson, Rockford, Ill.; Rev. A. E. Wenstrand, Chicago, Ill.; Chas. F. Holmes, Galesburg, Ill.; P. E. Wistrand, Ottawa, Ill.; Nels F. Sanborn, Lakeport, N. H.; Carl Eklund, Evanston, Ill.; Mrs. E. L. Rhoadarmer, Milan, Ill.; Bertha Johnson, Princeton, Ill.; Lena Bjorklund, Davenport, Iowa; Rev. A. G. Westergreen, Geneva, Ill.; Otto Brinberg, Moline, Ill.; Mrs. Matilda Warner Rutherford, Hepburn, Iowa; Mrs. Lottie (Westburg) Holden, Bellevue, Mich.; S. N. Holden, Bellevue, Mich.

Letters of regret received from Eric Croft, Los Angeles, Cal.; John A. Nelson, Wa Keeney, Kans.; Eric and David Aline, Eugene, Ore.; Rev. V. Witting, Worcester, Mass.; Mrs. S. Alexander, Monroe, Neb.; Andrew Nordberg, Cedarville, Kans.; Rev. H. W. Eklund, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Mr. and Mrs. D. Danielson, Wayne, Kans.; Erik and Martha Soder, Madrid, Iowa; Oscar Peal, Moline, Ill.; E. C. Johnson, Chicago, Ill.; Olof Norlin, Minden, Neb.; Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Anderson, Stratford, Iowa; Andrew Nordean, Loyalton, Cal.; Olof Jones, Stratford, Iowa.



A. G. WARNER.

Orderly Sergt. Co. D, 57th Reg. Ill.  
Vol. Inf. Later commissioned Cap-  
tain of a company in a colored  
regiment.



P. M. WICKSTRUM,

Capt. Co. D, 57th Reg. Ill. Vol. Inf.

Editorial by Mr. E. E. Fitch in the Galva News, October 1, 1896.

The Swedes took Bishop Hill last week for sure, but the credit of capturing the quaint old town on its fiftieth anniversary doesn't belong to them alone by any means. Hundreds of the old neighbors of the colonists who knew something of their liberty-loving spirit that impelled them to turn their faces away from the Fatherland, with all its endearing ties of kinship; with its tender memories of mountain and sunny upland and dell; with its hallowed recollections of the happy hours of life's rosy morning; these old neighbors, who knew also something of the sublime faith and heroic endurance which buoyed up these colonists in their new home through trials and sufferings almost too great for mortals to bear, were there and entered into the spirit of the festivities with as much enjoyment as the colonists themselves.

It is not our purpose in this article to give any account of the wonderful religious movement in Sweden which resulted finally in the establishment of the Colony here. Nor shall we speak of the early days of the colony life. This ground is covered fully by the speeches and historical papers published in this issue.

But we want to say a word in regard to the Bishop Hill of today. The village, by the government census of 1890, numbers 330 souls. It is situated on what was originally a wooded eminence overlooking a small stream, the headwaters of Edwards River. The location is a beautiful one and the village is one of the neatest and best kept in this part of the state. The yards, gardens and well tilled fields present a picture "fair as a garden of the Lord." The inhabitants are among the most intelligent and thrifty and are abreast of the times in all that pertains to a model village life. The buildings, as will be seen from the views here presented, are mostly the old colony buildings, but aside from this, scarcely a vestige of the old colony life remains. The lands are held in severalty and the government is that of the incorporated village. In its palmiest days Bishop Hill contained about 1100 souls. Everything was made in the community that was necessary for the community life, and the surplus found a ready market at good prices because of its general excellence.

Mr. Root well says, in his reponse to the address of welcome, that "In its most prosperous days had this town been enclosed by the Chinese Wall, the inhabitants would almost have had within the confines of their own possessions, abundant resources to supply their every want, without being dependent upon the outside world. They raised and manufactured into cloth their own wool and flax, made their own implements of every description, raised wheat and rye and ground the same into flour, manufactured leather and converted it into boots and shoes, burnt their own lime, raised horses, cattle, hogs and poultry, and their ten-horse-power sorghum mill was the largest in the northern part of the state, and very few of the necessaries of life were obtained elsewhere. Their industrial growth from the beginning was almost phenomenal."

The Bishop Hill Colony has passed away. Whether we agree or disagree with the religious tenets of the colonists; whether we agree or disagree with the idea of Colony life, the heart of every lover of liberty beats in sympathy with every honest effort, misdirected though it may be, to secure a larger measure of liberty for any portion of the race.

The Bishop Hill Colony has passed away, but those hardy pioneers have left in their descendants, a heritage to free government, of as intelligent, brave and loyal a class of citizens as can be found within our borders.

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We are indebted to the Swedish M. E. Book Concern of Chicago, Illinois, for the "Winter Scene," and to the Engberg-Holmberg Publishing Company, also of Chicago, for the following cuts: Prize Flag, Peter Johnson, Old Settlers' Group 1906, Eric Forsse, P. M. Wickstrum, Eric Berglund, Jonas Ericson, Jonas Kronberg, Olof Stoneberg, Eric U. Norberg, and A. G. Warner.











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