

# CARL JOHAN SANDQUIST

## Chapter 1— Genealogy & Emigration from Sweden

By Bill Hoffman, Glenn Brazelton, and others

### PROLOGUE:

Carl Johan Sandquist (1884-1969) has been a fascination of mine for many years, especially after acquiring the remains of his Brantwood Garage back in December 1969. Virtually nothing is left beyond a dated capstone from the front of the building to show where the Brantwood Garage was located, Carl Sandquist and his garage remain a fascinating piece of Brantwood, Wisconsin history that deserves remembering.



Carl Sandquist with a puppy next to the porch of his parent's home in Brantwood, WI.



Co-op Garage in Brantwood, WI circa 1948. Garage was originally built by Carl Sandquist as the Brantwood Garage and completed in December 1919.

Many sources were used in compiling this article. Thanks to back issues of The Prentice Calumet and

The Prentice News-Calumet, we have some highlights of Carl Sandquist in Brantwood. Sandquist family descendants also helped greatly with photographs and family history information, and I very much thank Bob Sandquist of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Ron Sandquist of Prentice for their help in this passionate endeavor. Glenn Brazelton helped research, collate and compile the various chapters, based on inputs from the preceding family members.

Looking back at Carl J. Sandquist, he was clearly a man of vision and intelligence who made major contributions to the growth and success of Brantwood and the Town of Knox in the early 20th century. He brought civility and culture to Brantwood when it was just a new settlement in the wilderness. His sense of esthetics gave us the buildings in the town known for their architectural beauty: the Clifford School, the Pershing School, Socialist Hall, and the Brantwood Garage and Blacksmith Shop. He contributed to the overall well being of the community by serving on the boards of many economic, educational, social and political organizations. His Brantwood Garage and Blacksmith Shop served as the social and cultural center of Brantwood by hosting dances, wrestling matches, church dinners, moving picture shows, ice skating, baseball, and other events. He also played the euphonium or baritone in the Brantwood Echo Band. Brantwood and the Town of Knox are a better place because of his contributions and influence.

**SANDQUIST FAMILY HERITAGE & EMIGRATION FROM SWEDEN:**

The parents of Carl Sandquist were Johannes Larsson and his wife, Kattarina Larsdotter, who were from the parish of Bitterna, county of Skaraborg, province of Västra Götland, Sweden located to the north-east of Gothenburg and south of Vara. Johannes, was the son of Lars Petterson and Britta Thorstendotter. Johannes was born on August 10, 1834 in Björstorp, Sweden in Bitterna Parish northeast of Gothenburg. He was baptized six days later in the nearby Bitterna parish church. Both Johannes and his father were torpare or share-croppers and Kattarina’s parents were farmers.

Bitterna parish dates to the 13th century, and the surrounding landscape is predominately flat and gently rolling farm land. The county of Skaraborg is known today as one of the finest farming areas in Sweden, boasting of good, fertile soil. Although Johannes was in Bitterna, he actually grew up in the nearby village of Långö . However, in this area the soil was rocky, full of boulders, and a difficult place to farm. In the 1870’s, Johannes and his parents moved again from Långö to a torp (a cottage

Contemporary photo of Bitterna Parish Church, Bitterna, Sweden.



**Children of Lars Pettersson & Britta Thoresdotter, and siblings of Johannes Larsson**

1. Katrina Larsdotter 1822 — 1823
2. Maja Stina (Maria) Larsdotter 1823 — ?
3. Katrina Larsdotter 1824 — 1830
4. Petter Larsson 1827 — ?
5. Johanna Larsdotter 1828 — 1831
6. Annica Larsdotter 1830 — 1831
7. Katrina Larsdotter 1832 — ?
8. JOHANNES LARSSON 1839 — 1906
9. Johanna Larsdotter 1839 — 1840
10. Anders Larsson 1841 — 1843

**Key Johannes Larsson Locations in Skaraborg Province in Southern Sweden**



with a leased farm similar to a croft) in a small place called Sandliden.

In Johannes’ day, the Bitterna socken, or parish, was fairly small, with a population of about 900, spread amongst about 25 small villages. Långö’s population was about 35 or so, and Sandliden was even smaller with perhaps a dozen souls.

To make things more difficult, southern Sweden





**Johannes Larsson Sandquist and Kattarina Larsdotter Sandquist**  
 Date and location unknown ... probably 1870's or 1880's

faced a variety of major epidemics including dysentery, cholera, and tuberculosis during the 1850's and 1860's. Then major droughts culminating in 1867 and 1868, when two years of the worst crop harvests brought on several years of famine resulting in the slaughtering of 1/3 to 1/2 of the cattle in the area. Disease, famine, drought, and poor land all hampered a young man from making a living and getting married, and encouraged individuals to seek fertile land and prosperity on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. To more fully understand the hardships that Johannes and his parents endured in Sweden, note that no more than three of Johannes' nine siblings survived into their adolescent years.

Eventually at the age 26, Johannes took a bride, and married Kattarina Larsdotter, age 20, on December 28,

1860 in the Bitterna Lutheran Church. Over the next 24 years, beginning in September 1861, Johannes and Kattarina had eleven children, nine born in Sweden and two born in America, including Carl who was the youngest boy. Of the nine children born in Sweden, three died relatively young, and the remaining six emigrated to America, eventually settling in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Swedish emigration to America began as early as 1638 when the Swedish West India Company established New Sweden on the banks of the Delaware River. However, the rising "first" wave of emigration from northern Europe didn't really begin until the 1840's, and a handful of individuals did venture westward to America from Bitterna in the late 1850's and into the 1860's. The Homestead Act of 1862 created a significant "pull" of free land for emigrants, and created a "second" wave of Swedish emigration after the Civil War in the United States and especially during the famine years of 1868 and 1869. One of these pioneering families was Johannes' older sister, Maja Stina (Maria) Larsdotter, and husband, Jon Jönsson. Maja Stina was age 30, and 11 years older than Johannes, when she and her husband Jon left for North America in 1853. Their departure was one of the first, if not the first, from Bitterna. While finances likely slowed the emigration of Johannes and Kattarina, letters from his sister Maja in Minnesota were likely a significant "pull" that added to the "push" of hard times of famine, drought, and poor land in Sweden.

A "third" and largest wave of Swedish emigration began in 1879. On April 30, 1880, Johannes Larsson sailed from Gothenburg, Sweden, with his destination listed as Saint James, Minnesota. He left initially without his family, but with the likelihood of railroad employment once he arrived in America. Many Swedes who emigrated from

**Children of Johannes Larson Sandquist and Kattarina Larsdotter**

1. **August Sandquist**, b. 9/20/1861, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 10/02/1925, St. Paul, MN
  2. **Alfred Sandquist**, b. 1862, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 1869, Bitterna, Sweden
  3. **Herman J. Sandquist**, b. 5/25/1866, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 8/8/1959, Milltown, WI
  4. **Johan Wilhelm Sandquist**, b. 1869, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 1869, Bitterna, Sweden
  5. **Alfred Oliver Sandquist**, b. 5/8/1870, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 12/27/1958, Prentice, WI
  6. **Emma Elenia Sandquist**, b. 11/7/1872, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 5/12/1939, Centuria, WI
  7. **Ida Sandquist**, b. 11/7/1872, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 11/10/1872, Bitterna, Sweden
  8. **Alexander Sandquist**, d. 11/14/1875, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 11/11/1940, Knox, WI
  9. **Anna Sandquist**, d. 8/27/1878, Bitterna, Sweden, d. 1/21/1895, St. James, MN
  10. **Carl Johann Sandquist**, b. 2/17/1884, Nelson, MN, d. 5/19/1969, Chicago, IL
  11. **Selma Amanda Sandquist**, b. 11/6/1885, Nelson, MN, d. 4/11/1981, Ladysmith, WI
- NOTE:** Nelson refers to Nelson Township in Watonwan County just north of St. James, MN

Skaraborg county emigrated to St. James and other places within about a 25-mile radius, with the farmland being quite similar to the best lands in Skaraborg.

After a 2+ day voyage, Johannes likely landed in Hull, England, where he awaited for an onward train to Liverpool, England or Glasgow, Scotland, where he would board a steamer for America. This was not a pleasant journey and the Hull Board of Health reported frequently on conditions that emigrants faced.

*...concerning the poor and unacceptable standards of accommodation offered to the emigrants. In one instance, they described the migrants as second class passengers treated more like cattle than humans, In another, human excrement was running down the side of the ships and sticking to the side of the vessel upon in which 200 migrants were to be housed for 4 days until their train for Liverpool was ready.*

*... emigrants waited some time until an onward train was available to Liverpool. Most of the immigrants entering Hull travelled via the Paragon Railway Station and then onto Liverpool, via Leeds, Huddersfield and Stalybridge. The train tickets were part of a package that included the steamship ticket to Hull, a train ticket to Liverpool and then the steamship ticket to their final destination, America. Sometimes so many emigrants arrived at one time that there would be up to 17 carriages being pulled by one steam engine. All the baggage was stored in the rear 4 carriages, with the passengers filling the carriages neared the front of the train. The trains took precedence over all other train services because of their length and usually left Hull on a Monday morning around 11.00 a.m., arriving in Liverpool usually between 2.00 and 3.00 p.m.*

Once arriving in America, probably in late May 1880 at New York or Baltimore after a two week voyage,

Johannes likely then travelled directly to Minnesota over a period of several days, using the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. His route was probably via Chicago, and then onto Rochester or St. Paul on other lines, before arriving in St. James, Minnesota, about 100 miles southwest of St. Paul.

#### **THE SANDQUIST FAMILY IN ST. JAMES, MINNESOTA:**

When Johannes Larsson Sandquist arrived in the St. James, in Watonwan County, Minnesota, probably in June 1880, the community consisted of unsettled prairie land and a few scattered small farms. The

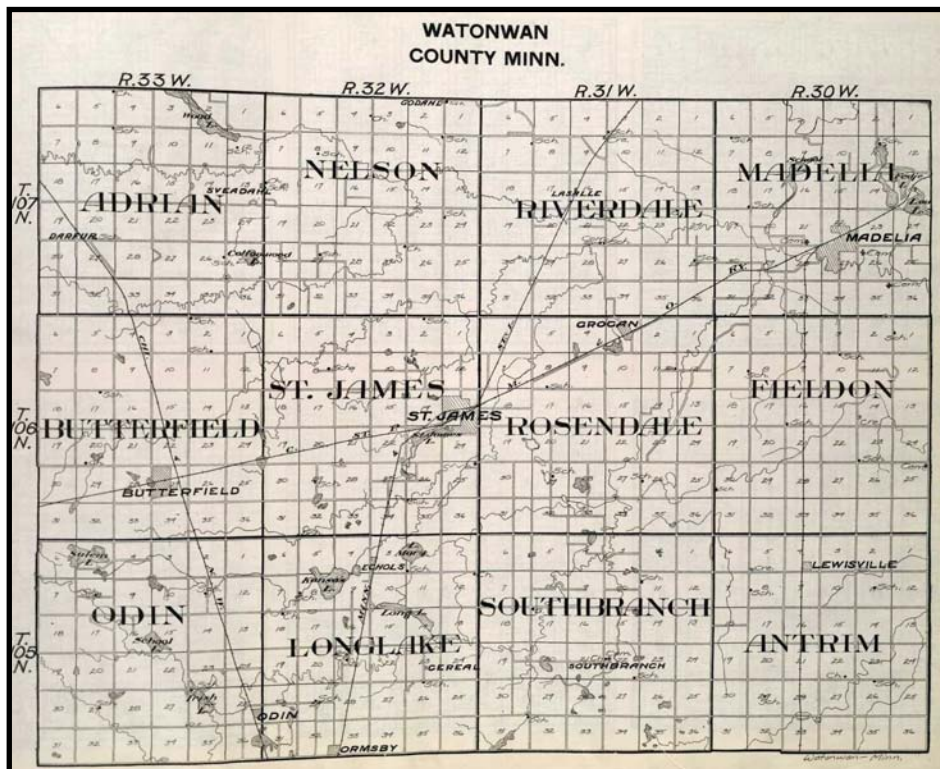
**Photo of the Emigrant Waiting Room of the North Eastern Railway Company at the Hull Paragon Railway Station. The waiting room was built for Scandinavian immigrants passing through Hull in 1871, and then extended in 1882.**



**1876 Map of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.**

county was organized in 1860 shortly after Minnesota was granted statehood. The town site for St. James was selected in 1867 by the directors of the St. Paul and Sioux City railroads as the midpoint for a new railroad linking the two cities. The town was platted in July 1870, built during the summer and fall of 1870, incorporated in April 1871, and selected as county seat in 1878.

When Johannes arrived, there was almost no way of earning money around St. James, outside of helping farmers at harvesting time. Farm help was usually hired by the year and received about \$75.00 a year plus room and board. At that time notices were posted in town that the Canadian Pacific Railroad



was building a railroad out of Winnipeg, Canada towards the west coast. They advertised for 20,000 men and 20,000 horses. Wages were \$1.00 per day plus keeps, which meant eating and sleeping in tents. Johannes and many others signed up for the summer and were shipped out to Canada. He worked there laying out the new railroad until fall when the work was discontinued until the following spring. At that point they could see the mountains in the distance near Calgary.

From his earnings on the railroad during the summer of 1880, Johannes bought 120 acres of land in Nelson Township, just a few miles north of St. James, Minnesota. He then sent for his wife and six surviving children from Sweden and they arrived in St. James in 1881. Shortly after his arrival in St. James, Johannes began using the anglicized version of his name, specifically John Larson. But in 1881, he also took his surname a step further, purportedly because so many farmers around St. James had the name of Larson, and his mail was read by up to twelve different people before he got it. The county judge at St. James charged him \$1.00 to have the name legally changed to Johannes Larson Sandquist, and Kattarina used the Sandquist surname when she followed Johannes to Minnesota in 1881.

So why did Johannes Larsson become Johannes Sandquist? From our analysis, it appears to stem back to when Johannes departed from Sandliden in Bitterna parish enroute to America. "Quist" or more accurately "kvist" is Swedish for branch, and it was not uncommon for Swedes for centuries to use their place name or some physical feature of their village, as their surname. So it appears that Johannes selected Sandquist or Sandkvist as a surname to represent his linkage to the "branch" from "SAND"liden in Bitterna parish.

**Further chapters of this article on the youngest son, Carl Johan Sandquist — an entrepreneur, political & cultural icon, and historical figure in early years of Brantwood, Wisconsin — will be published in future issues of the Price County Historical Society Newsletter.**