



Comfort and Beauty in Swedish Rural Life

This spring, step back into the Swedish countryside of over 200 years ago and experience the rare and artful cushions and bed covers woven and stitched by skilled women for their households. The majority of the textiles featured were done by women living on farms in southern Sweden where weaving and textile production were important skills to bring to a household. Women produced impressive numbers of these textiles during the cold winter months. The textiles fell out of fashion by around 1850 as industrialization crept into Sweden and farms were decimated by famine and overpopulation. Today's museums and private collections benefit greatly from the surviving examples of these textiles kept in families well after the mid-1800s.

During the height of production, women and their daughters made countless pillow cases, bed coverings, and cushions for their homes and carriages, many of which were prepared for their dowries in anticipation of their future marriages and families. Some of the textiles were used inside houses

and on furniture, especially on chairs and benches, while others were used as decorative pillows for carriage rides to and from church services, on town errands, and to visit friends and family. Some were even used on church benches to ease the discomfort that austere wooden seating had for congregations listening to long sermons on Sunday mornings.

Life on the farm revolved around the seasons. A firm knowledge of plants and animal husbandry helped families succeed in growing crops and keeping their herds of cattle, sheep, and goats healthy and safe. Knowing plant origins, lifespans, and dangers allowed people to thrive in villages far from city centers. Knowledge of animals sometimes took on supernatural tendencies resulting in stories of mythical creatures roaming the countryside. These folk customs ended up being stitched or woven into the textiles and cushions used within the home. Creatures like the Bäckhäst, a horse-shaped animal, unicorns, and werewolves, became designs,

TOP: Flamskväv agedyna (Flemish weave cushion) with two urns and flowers. The textile features four women likely wearing traditional Swedish regional costumes and four birds. Collection of Wendel and Diane Swan.

ABOVE: Rölakan agedyna (double interlocked tapestry woven cushion) dated 1799 with stars, birds, and geometric patterns. The border is a vigg (lightning) pattern sometimes seen on upholstery that is common to many areas of Europe.

Note from the Director

One truly satisfying part of my job is the opportunity to interact with passionate people. In the last four days I have interacted with people passionate enough about pea soup to argue that using olive oil instead of butter in the recipe will fundamentally alter the soup. I have sat with members of the Genealogy Club who are happy to spend hours on a Saturday afternoon learning about resources and sharing their knowledge with one another.

We found next-level passion when the museum's curator, Christopher Malone, and I were invited to visit a home near Chadds Ford. When the owner and her brother were starting renovations, they found a three-story colonial log and stone structure under the modern building materials. As they delved into the house's history, they found it was likely to have been a trading post built by a New Sweden Colony settler around 1660 to trade with the Lenape. The owner's research has led her down fascinating paths of her own family history, international colonial intrigue (even piracy), and stories of trade in the Delaware Valley. It is clear that all of the threads of knowledge she has pursued in relationship to learning about her home have radically enriched her life.

Another of these passionate individuals is someone who ASHM visitors will have the opportunity to "meet" soon--the collector behind our Spring exhibition, Wendel Swan. Wendel was a serious oriental rug collector when an antiques dealer introduced him to another kind of textile—Swedish woven and embroidered seat cushions. His passion for these materials was ignited, and now, 18 years later, he and his wife own more than 60 examples of these textiles which vibrantly fill their home.

Interacting with such a diverse group of passionate people reminds me that you never know what experience is going to spark a lifelong journey of discovery.

Tracey Beck

Tracey Beck

Comfort and Beauty continued from front cover

while indigenous animals like elk, reindeer, and geese were also used as motifs on the pillows and cushions.

Not all the designs were drawn from local flora, fauna, and animals. Some cushions featured parrots or patterns not common to the Scandinavian peninsula. For centuries, Viking traders came back to Sweden with the spoils of war or conquest. Later, shipping merchants brought carpets from the Near East and Asia that featured some of the same techniques, weaving styles, and iconography found in textiles from various Swedish provinces. It is possible that these motifs were passed down through Swedish culture or even that Swedish women saw examples in city markets or wealthy homes. It is undeniable, though, that Swedish woven pillows and cushions related to the textile traditions of other cultures thousands of miles away.

For Wendel Swan, whose collection makes up the exhibition, textiles have always been an avocation from which he has gained insight into cultures and histories around the world. Wendel began collecting oriental rugs in 1968 and soon began organizing conferences, exhibitions, and tours of significant textiles collections. He became a trustee of the Textile Museum at George Washington University in Washington D.C. where he serves as co-chair of the Exhibitions and Programs committee. Wendel's fascination for Swedish textiles is no coincidence. His paternal grandparents emigrated from Sweden, and he had the chance to visit Sweden twice when he was younger. It wasn't until 2006 that he began collecting Swedish cushions (*agedyna* and *jynne*) and covers (*rya*). Wendel's collection is made up of cushions, covers, and pillows in different techniques including *Flamskväv* (flemish weave), the predominant structure among continental European tapestries, embroidery, long-stitch embroidery, *Rölakan* (dove-tail tapestry), twist stitch, *Trensaflossa* (inserted pile or half-pile weaving), covers (*Rya* and *Täcke*), pieced-cloth and felt, *Krabbasnår* (crab thicket technique), and *Opphämta* (pick up technique). However, Wendel also collects 20th century Swedish textiles including

two by the workshop of Märta Måås-Fjetterström, the artist who designed the tapestry hanging in ASHM's Fredrika Bremer Room.

Visitors will be enchanted with the whimsical designs, geometric patterns, exotic birds, real and mythical creatures, religious depictions, crowns, floral themes, and even patterns from Roman mosaics featured in *Swedish Folk Weavings for Marriage, Carriage, and Home 1750 to 1840*. While the decline of this textile tradition happened as farming life changed, the cushions and pillows became "Sunday Culture," appearing only Sundays and special occasions rather than every day. This undoubtedly preserved their bright colors and delicate structures so that we can appreciate them today. ASHM is excited to share a piece of the Swedish countryside and rural lifestyle with visitors in the United States. Wendel Swan's collection of Swedish textiles is one of the largest outside Sweden and presents a rare opportunity to see such a large body of work made by women.

Swedish Folk Weavings for Marriage, Carriage, and Home was developed in collaboration with Wendel and Diane Swan whose collection is primarily featured in the exhibition. The exhibition will be on view from March 15, 2024 through September 22, 2024 with a preview night on March 14.



Flamskväv *agedyna* (Flemish weave cushion), dated 1822, with a red ground, undulating flowers and a central multicolor spiral star. Collection of Wendel and Diane Swan.

Spring Ting Auction

We are eagerly preparing for our Spring Ting auction that provides vital funding for the Museum's exhibitions and educational programs. This year our online auction will be open for bidding from April 24 through May 3, and our silent auction will be held at our Spring Ting dinner on May 4. Please consider participating in one of these ways:

- Donate items for the auction! The key to any successful fundraising auction is having a great catalog of items for people to bid on. Are you creative? Considering donating something you have made. Gift cards/certificates

are also wonderful things to donate—consider buying one from a local business. We need to receive all items for the auction by April 1. Please contact the museum by calling 215.389.1776 for more information on how to donate.

- Bid on items in our online auction! Our online auction makes it possible for ASHM supporters to participate no matter where you are. Encourage your friends and family to bid too! Bidding is easy to do with your cell phone or computer.

- Join us in person at the silent auction on May 4th for a memorable evening!



2024 Outstanding Achievement Awardee: Ulrika Bengsston

ASHM is proud to announce that Ulrika Bengsston will receive this year's Outstanding Achievement Award at our Spring Ting Dinner and Auction on Saturday, May 4th.

Ulrika Bengsston was born in the southern Swedish countryside in the town of Värnamo. Her father hunted and brought home moose, deer, and hare which her mother would prepare. Everything else they ate they grew themselves. Food was a way of life for her family, so the value of cooking was instilled in Ulrika from a very early age. Ulrika fondly recalls pulling a carrot out of the garden, wiping it off on the grass, and calling that a snack. At age 16, Ulrika chose to enter cooking school as a way to travel while doing what she loves.

On a visit to her sister and her friends in New York City in 1989, Ulrika fell in love with the city. New Yorkers were loud and opinionated, just like her, and she felt right at home. The very next year, she joined the staff at the prestigious Swedish restaurant Aquavit where she gained invaluable experience before accepting a unique position cooking for the Swedish Consulate General with a focus on introducing American businesses to Sweden. It was during this time that Ulrika flourished creatively. She created Swedish food events, like herring tastings and crayfish

parties, conducted food demonstrations at culinary schools all over the world, and was even featured on television shows. At the Nobel laureate dinner, she displayed and sliced a whole rack of venison in front of an audience. At the Volvo auto show in Detroit she had to work all night to prepare 5000 miniature dishes. Through networking, Ulrika successfully developed a platform and name for herself.

In 1999, Ulrika opened her own namesake restaurant which she feels was her greatest contribution to the Swedish food scene in NYC. She missed the food she grew up with and wanted to promote farm to fork values that she felt were lacking in other restaurants. Ulrika's was more casual than the high-end Aquavit and offered more than Fabrique, the bakery from Stockholm, but was more upscale than Smør, the trendy

Danish eatery. Ulrika prided herself on her restaurant's atmosphere, and her staff's customer service, knowledge, friendliness, and approachability.

These are all qualities she has brought to the Björk Café & Bistro which opened in the Fall of 2022 at Scandinavia House on Park Avenue. This is where you can try her current favorite signature recipe, the Fish and Shellfish Bisque or the Herring Plate - herb herring, mustard herring with dill, pickled herring with pickled carrot & leek, matjes herring with sour cream & onion, Egg of Gentleman's Delight, cheese, boiled potato, and crispbread.

We are thrilled to honor Ulrika with our Outstanding Achievement Award and look forward to many more culinary accomplishments in her career.

We hope to see you at Spring Ting on May 4th to honor Ulrika and support ASHM! Spring Ting raises crucial funding for exhibitions and education programs offered both at the Museum and at sites throughout the Philadelphia region. Tickets begin at \$125, and you can register online.

Can't make it to the dinner? Support the Museum through our online auction that will run from April 27th to May 3rd.



Spring 2024 Upcoming Events and Registration Info

To Register For Events

call 215-389-1776, or visit online at www.americanswedish.org/calendar.htm

There is always something going on at the American Swedish Historical Museum. See below for scheduled events. Please check with the Museum to confirm dates and other details. Refunds will not be granted for cancellations less than 10 days prior to the program date. To register for events by phone call (215) 389-1776. Online registration is available through each event listing on the website.



Monthly Program: Toddler Time

10:30 – 11:30 am

The third Tuesday of each month ASHM offers specially designed programs to

introduce Swedish culture through art, science, and literature in uniquely fun and creative ways to children ages 2 to 5 years old.

Tuesday, March 19 Whatever the Weather

Tuesday, April 16

Tuesday, May 21

Tuesday, June 18



Exhibition Preview: Swedish Folk Weavings for Marriage, Carriage, and Home 1750-1840

Thursday, March 14
5:00 – 8:00 pm

This exhibition features rare, historical, and artful carriage cushions, chair cushions, and bed covers woven by or for women for their dowries or households. Dating between 1750 and 1840, these textiles reflect the influence of trade and depict everything from exotic birds to Roman mosaics. The exhibition preview is free to the public with light refreshments served. RSVP online.



Easter Family Fun Day and Egg Hunt Sunday, March 24th

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Introduce your little ones to Swedish Easter traditions.

Children can make Swedish Easter crafts, dress up as Swedish Easter witches, enjoy face painting, and take part in an egg hunt. Free for members and children 2 years and under, \$10 for non-members. Buy tickets in advance or pay at the door.



Earth Day Free Family Day Sunday, April 14th

12:00 – 4:00 pm

Join us for our Free Family Day celebrating Earth Day! In collaboration with FDR

Park, we will have family friendly activities and crafts inside and outside the Museum focusing on nature, recycling, and other ways we can take care of the Earth.



ASHM Virtual Member Chat: The Sun Worshiper Tuesday, April 23rd 6:00 – 7:00 pm

All ASHM members are invited to this exclusive

discussion group. This month we get a behind-the-scenes peek at the history and restoration of the Sun Worshiper Sculpture by Swedish Sculptor Ida Thorsen. Not a member? No problem. Become a member and register for the discussion online.



Free Virtual Lecture: Early Swedish Folk Weavings at the American Swedish Historical Museum by Wendel Swan Wednesday, May 1st 1:00 pm

Wendel Swan, who has loaned more than 50 textiles for the Swedish Folk Weavings exhibition, will discuss the historical background of Scandinavian weavings since the Viking era and, with profuse illustrations, the enormous diversity of Swedish textiles in design elements, colors, and weaving techniques that are astonishing for an area as small as Scania. Online registration required.



Spring Ting Saturday May 4th 6:00 pm

Join us at our special fundraiser, featuring a silent auction and three-course dinner prepared by noted Philadelphia caterer Jeffery Miller. During this year's event, we are pleased to honor chef Ulrika Bengtsson with the museum's Outstanding Achievement Award. Tickets start at \$125. RSVP by April

19th. Call or check our website for more information.



Craft Night Out: Flower Arranging Thursday, May 16th 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Get ready for a fun night out! Kristen Pickell of Pickells

and Posies will lead a guided class on how to make your floral arrangements pop. The event includes a guided tour of our *Swedish Folk Weaving* exhibition for floral inspiration, a vase and all materials, and a Scandinavian dessert charcuterie board! Check our events website for more information and to register.



Midsommarfest Saturday, June 24th 4:00 – 7:00 pm

Celebrate summer at our annual Midsommarfest, complete with food, drinks,

homemade Swedish pastries, music and maypole dancing, as well as crafts and games for the kids. Pre-register online or pay at the door.



Save the Date: Smörgåsbeer Saturday, July 27th 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Spend a gorgeous summer evening at the American

Swedish Historical Museum in FDR Park enjoying regional and international beers alongside Swedish-inspired eats! Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door.

Craft Night Out: Flower Arranging Thursday, May 16th 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Get inspired by the floral designs and patterns in our next exhibition, *Swedish Folk Weavings for Marriage, Carriage, and Home* with a guided tour and then it's time to get creative! Kristen Pickell of Pickells and Posies will lead a guided class on how to make your floral arrangements pop!

Grab your friends, and don't miss this fun night out! The event includes a guided tour, all craft materials, and a Scandinavian dessert charcuterie board. Check our events website for more information and to register.



Images from Recent Events

Photographs by ASHM Staff



◀ Nordic Night trivia at Liquid Alchemy Beverages.



▲ Volunteers for the ASHM Auxiliary preparing food for the Swedish Café at Lucia.

▼ Attendees at Julbord Dinner prepared by Jeffrey A. Miller Catering.



▲ Assistant Director Lauren Burnham with Herb Rambo and Liquid Alchemy co-founder Jeffery Cheskin at the Talk and Tasting for Rambo's Revival: New Sweden Apple and Lingonberry Cider.

▼ Participants in this year's Lucia performances, including Lucia, Rey Stanforth.



▲ Early shoppers at the Christmas Market preview night before Julbord Dinner.



▲ Görel Bengtzon selling glögg for the Midsommarklubben at the Christmas Market..



◀ Families participating in a clothing design activity at the Free Family Day for the Karin Larsson: Let the Hand Be Seen exhibit.



◀ Erik Heinike and Glenn Kasper serving soup at the Pea Soup Dinner.

Contributions

Do you want to make a contribution? There are several easy ways to support us. Visit our web page americanswedish.org/support or call **215-389-1776** for more information.

New Members

October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Sustaining

Kristin Conklin

Household

Karolina Brodin
Marta Hasz
Carolyn Miller
Aaron Nelson
Jared Pickell
James Stocking
Goran Thorell
Jason Vanderploog
Alexandra Vojvodic

Individual

Margaret Frederick
David Holtz
Wyatt Johnson
Shawn Thornsberry

Senior/Student

Julie Benson
Marilyn Bruff
Jim DePhilippo
Paula Malone
Joy Peterson
Rachel Rodgers
Eva Wattenmaker

In Memoriam

The ASHM community lost some very special members in the last few months. We send our condolences to their friends and family.

Gloria Aitken
Herman Baron
Christina Holm
Phillip Milliken

Annual Giving and Contributions

October 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Serafimer

Anonymous
Augustana Heritage Society
Minneapolis Foundation
Philadelphia Cultural Fund

Vasa

Anonymous
Olof Bergqvist
Elisabeth Brown
Gregory Brown
Margaret Copeland
Pao Ling Lee
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
Ulla Martz
in memory of Anna-Mari N. Martz
Mary McCoy
Pedro A. Ramos
Susan Sjostrom
SWEA New Jersey
Fanny Warren
Al Wulff
H. T. Wurts

Gold

Clarissa Bonde
Ken & Kerstin Cook
Gordon & Jane Downing
W. Robert & Judith Lang
Duane Malm
Nord Cascading Unitrust Fund
Margot Patterson
Wade Sjogren
Wendel Swan

Silver

Bill and Tracey Beck
Deborah Belusa
Anna-Lena Bromberg
Leonard Busby
Ju Ting Cheng
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
William Honig
Melissa & Tom Weismann-Hooper

Bronze

Anonymous
Christer Baeckstrom
Helene Basile
Sandra Brown
Lisa Caplan
Alice Christensen
Margaret Churchville
Hilma Cooper
Eric Daum
in memory of Rev. Karl-Axel Elmqvist
Celeste Greene
Samuel W. Heed
Eva & Bill Hohman
Ralph Holmberg
Thomas & Mary Ann Hudson
Gudmund Iversen

Anita Jensen
Carl R. Karlsson
Karin Kornaga
Doris Lehman
Gunhild Ljung
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
Norman Marcus
Roger & Margareta McCrea
Mary Anne Carlson Morgan
Anna-Stina & Samuel Payne
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
Mark Rosstedt
Kjerstin & Dominic Sama
Shirley Stengel

Friend

Anonymous
Carole Bartholdson
Brian Clancy
Catharina Copeland
Jill D'Andrea
Ann Eachus
in honor of Linda Jönebring
Barbara E. Good
Sylvia Holteen
Alice Hurwitz
Margaretha Joelsson
Kristina & Charles Kalb
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
Richard Kiger
Christian Roden
Faith Sandstrom
Svenska Skolan
in memory of Yngve Lennart Gustafsson
Margaretha Talerman
Adelbert Thompson
Amy & Harry Vergren
Inger Zeller

Meet Our New Marketing Assistant, Amelia Domy!



Amelia Domy comes to us from Jönköping, Sweden. She recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics, with a specialization in marketing at Jönköping International Business School. While Amelia has previously spent time in the United States, including a semester at Georgia State University, she has never been to Philadelphia. She loves to travel and visit new places, so she's excited to explore Philadelphia and other nearby cities.

Say hello and welcome to Amelia when she's taking pictures at Museum events or managing our social media!

Now on View Throughout the Galleries

In an effort to place more of the museum's collections on view, two galleries and the second-floor balcony space have been refreshed with objects that have been in storage and some that were recently acquired in the past year. In the John Ericsson room, a dining room chair and desk from his New York City apartment can be seen under a painting by Charles E. Hallberg of the battle between Ericsson's ironclad ship the USS Monitor, and the Confederate frigate the CSS Virginia (formerly the USS Merrimack). John Ericsson lived and worked in his home at 36 Beach Street, New York, for more than 25 years. Photographs placed near the desk and chair showcase the pieces of furniture within Ericsson's apartment. Both pieces date between 1860-1885 and are made of walnut. The desk was first given to the museum on loan from the John Ericsson Society who received it from Fitz John Porter in memory of his father Holbrook John Fitz Porter. Porter used the desk after the death of Ericsson in his office at the National Museum of Engineering History. The chair is one of a set that can be seen in the interior photographs of John Ericsson's apartment. The chair is also depicted in the painting by Olle Hjortzberg of John Ericsson meeting with Abraham Lincoln's war cabinet in the John Ericsson room. The chair was donated in 1937 by Swedish Consul General Martin Kastengren.

ASHM has an extensive collection of Jenny Lind objects, ephemera, and memorabilia. Those on display in the Jenny Lind room make up a small percentage of the impressive collection. Three important early photographs of Jenny Lind, her husband Otto Goldschmidt, and one of her children are now on view in a special case meant to preserve their delicate nature. All three are daguerreotypes, the first publicly available photographic process, and feature Jenny Lind while she was touring America with P.T. Barnum. One of the images is of Jenny Lind holding a child. According to the photograph's history, Jenny Lind presented this Daguerreotype to the Rev.



Photo of walnut desk used by John Ericsson in his apartment, dated 1860-1885.

Jehu Curtis Clay, Rector of Old Swedes' Church (Gloria Dei) at the time of her visit to Philadelphia either in 1850 or 1852. Lind attended services at Old Swedes' Church and also entertained at the home of Rev. Clay. Another image features Jenny Lind with her husband and accompanist Otto Goldschmidt. In July of 1851, Lind performed for a crowd of 1,800 people at the Old First Church in Northampton, Massachusetts where she married Goldschmidt, and the two honeymooned for three months at the Round Hill Hotel. The final image was taken during one of Lind's visits to Boston. The photograph was made by the firm of Southworth & Hawes, who are known to have elevated photographic portraits to the level of fine art. This image

remained in the Hawes family even after Josiah Johnson Hawes died in 1901. The majority of the collection was sold during the Great Depression, but some images, like this one of Jenny Lind, made their way to other organizations. The Hawes family sold this daguerreotype to ASHM in 1938 with funds donated by the Jenny Lind Club of Detroit.

ASHM endeavors put more of its collection of view so that visitors can have a rich and dynamic experience each time they visit the museum. These objects are just some of the newly exhibited pieces from the collection that you will find as you explore our hallways and galleries. We invite you to join us as we showcase new and old objects from our collection along with our rotating changing exhibitions that aim to inspire our visitors to explore cultural identity through the stories of Scandinavians here at ASHM.



Daguerreotype of Jenny Lind taken during a visit to Boston in 1851 by photographers Southworth & Hawes..

Connecting
Cultures and
Community

ASHM Awarded Grant Support



We are thrilled to announce that the American Swedish Historical Museum has received a \$35,000 grant from the Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial!

The goal of this group is to support Philadelphia-area programs celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Philadelphia has long enjoyed pride of place for the observation of

major national milestones. The Centennial of 1876 was a massive success, attracting more than 10 million visitors to Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial hopes to build on that proud legacy by providing financial support to eligible nonprofits that are planning and hosting programs related to the 2026 commemorations. Founding funders of the collaborative include the Connelly Foundation, the William Penn

Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, The Neubauer Family Foundation, Comcast, and the Hamilton Family Charitable Trust.

ASHM will utilize these funds to help us imagine, research, develop public exhibitions, and commission a work of art related to the upcoming 2026 celebrations. The year 2026 is a momentous one on many levels. Our country turns 250 years old and the American Swedish Historical Museum will celebrate its 100th birthday! This dual anniversary is the perfect time to focus on the many cultures that founded our nation and how each American's cultural background is part of the ongoing story of our country.

The ASHM Online Shop is up and running! New items are being added every week. Visit shop.americanswedish.org today!