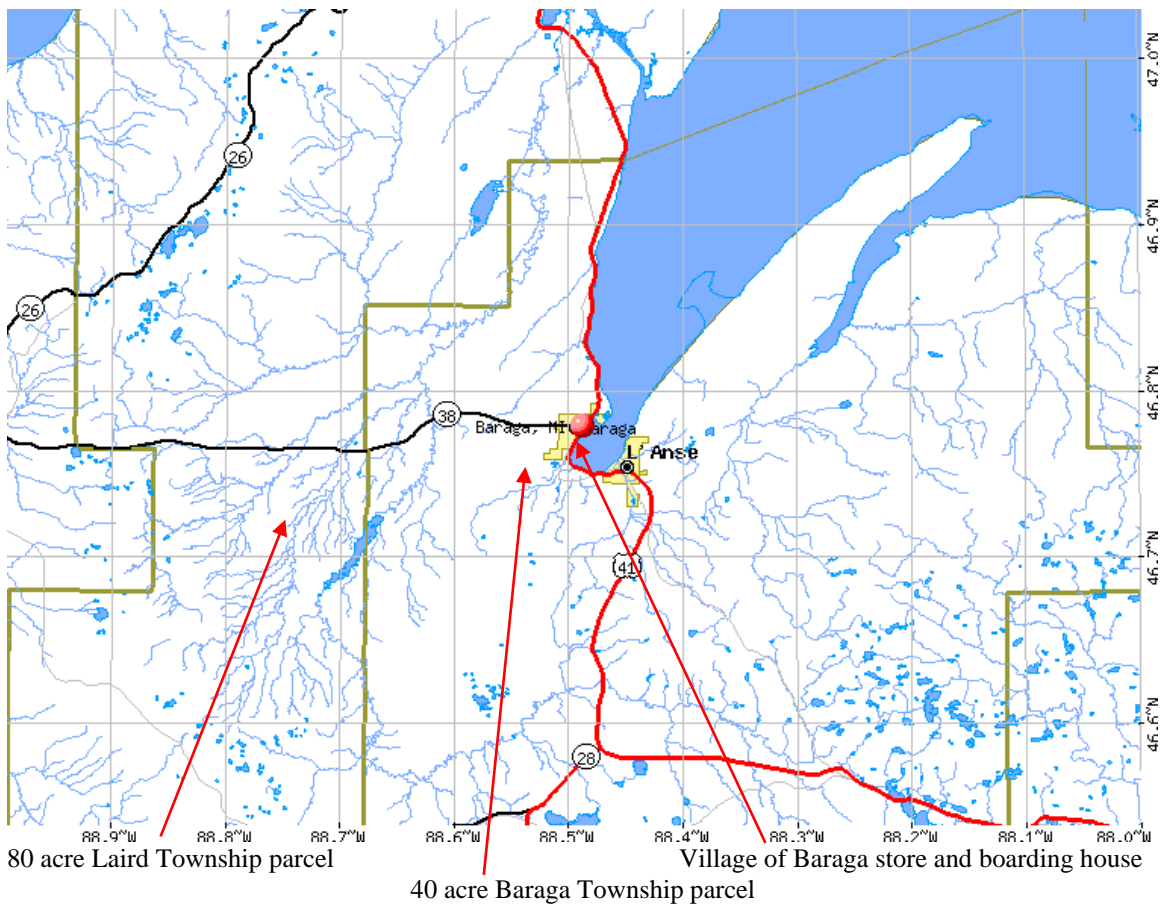


III (Continued)

The Bergs in Baraga

We thus far have three different occupations listed for Martin. His occupation was “boarding house” on John Albert’s 1893 birth record; “farmer” on Clara’s 1895 birth record; and “grocery store and feed store” on the 1900 census. Since Martin owned a single parcel of real estate in town, and since one boarder was listed in the 1900 census, the property was likely a boarding house at one time, with the store added later. It was not unusual at the time to have a retail operation on the first floor, and residential quarters on the second floor. As noted in the photographs, most of the properties on Main Street were two story frame structures.

The following map shows the approximate location of the three Berg real estate parcels:



I could not find the late 19th Century or early 20th Century grantor/grantee index in the courthouse basement closet. As a result, I could not find the deeds for the Berg’s acquisition of either the 40 acre farm or the boarding house/grocery store. I did review the index for the 1930s and 1940s, but I did not find any deed for the brothers’ sale of the

Baraga County properties. I did not search Houghton County records at all, for the purchase or later sale of the 80 acre parcel.

I asked two different title insurance companies to search the real estate records to find one or more of the missing deeds. Neither of them is located in Baraga County – in fact there are no title companies in Baraga County. One of them in nearby Iron County could not help. Its representative told me that it would have the same difficulty as I did finding records in the basement closet. (This is despite its claim on its website that “it has the oldest and most complete set of records for Iron County, Ontonagon County, and Baraga County, with Tract Indexes dating back to Government Patent”.) The other title company is located in Houghton County, but it has yet to respond to my request. Title companies are not very busy in this dismal economy. My suspicions are that it did not have the records or indexes within its home office, and no one at the title company was eager to spend a week or so in the Baraga County Courthouse basement closet.

The 1910 federal census confirms John Albert still living in Baraga, at age 16 (although his name is listed as Albert J.). Martin is not listed in the household, but mother Amelia (now 38), and brothers Frederick W. (19), George B. (14), and Elmer O. (12) remain in the household. Also included is Christina Anderson, age 44. John Amundson is not listed. This suggests his death sometime between the 1900 and 1910 censuses.

Amelia’s occupation at this time is owner of a grocery store. John and Frederick’s occupation is listed as salesmen at the grocery store. The census also notes Amelia’s immigration to the U.S. as 1888. Christina’s occupation is listed as servant. She was born in Sweden, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1884.

John Albert registered for the draft in 1917, listing Baraga as his residence. He requested exemption from the draft since “Mother, delicate & depends on me to run store & farm”.

The image shows a 1917 draft registration card for John Albert Berg. The card is divided into two main sections: "REGISTRATION CARD" on the left and "REGISTRAR'S REPORT A 21-5-2" on the right. The registration card contains fields for name, address, date of birth, occupation, and other personal details. The registrar's report includes a signature, date, and address of the registrar, along with a handwritten address: "1547 Ohio Ave, Escanaba, Mich".

John Albert Berg’s 1917 draft registration card.

Incidentally, he re-registered for the draft again in 1942 – at the age of 48 – listing Evanston, Illinois as his residence.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)			
SERIAL NUMBER U 1827	1. NAME (Print) John Albert Berg		ORDER NUMBER
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 421 Sherman Ave Evanston Cook Illinois			
3. MAILING ADDRESS Same			
4. TELEPHONE Main 1324	5. AGE IN YEARS 48	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Baraga	
DATE OF BIRTH May 22 1893 Michigan			
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs Irene M Berg 421 Sherman Ave Evanston Ill			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Pheall Mfg Co 5704 Roosevelt Rd Chicago Ill.			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Same			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE			
D. S. S. FORM 1 (Revised 4-1-42)			John Albert Berg (Registrant's signature)

John Albert Berg's 1942 draft registration card.

Neither the 1920 nor 1930 census contained any reference to the Berg family in Baraga County, suggesting that they had moved out of the county sometime prior to 1920. I did find a reference to Frederick W. Berg (John Albert's older brother) in the 1920 census as living in Turlock, California. Frederick was 28 by this time, married to Alcy (age 22), with a child less than a year old (Barbara). Frederick is identified as born in Michigan, to Swedish parents, and his occupation is "assistant manager dry goods". Alcy was born in California, to parents who were born in Indiana.

John Albert had left Baraga as well by 1920. He was living in Evanston, Illinois with his new wife and his in-laws. The 1920 census shows John Albert as the head of household, at age 26. His occupation is difficult to read, but it appears he was a government surveyor. Irene is 24, and listed as born in Virginia (with her mother born in Pennsylvania and her father born in Ohio).

Irene's mother – Cora Johnston - was living with them. Cora was 42 and widowed. She was born in Pennsylvania. Her father was born in Pennsylvania and her mother in Maryland.

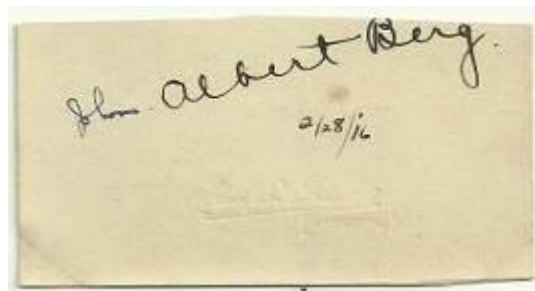
Also living with them were Maude and Morley Reading, listed as John's in-laws. Maude (age 21) was evidently Irene's sister. She was likewise born in Pennsylvania. Morley (age 22) was born in Michigan, as were both of his parents. He was a collection teller for a bank. Also in the household was Maude and Morley's one year old daughter, Dorothy.

(As an aside, I was curious about the Reading family, and their daughter Dorothy. In 1920, John and Irene Berg had a young niece in their household named Dorothy. Within a few years, John and Irene would have their first child. It seems unusual to me that John and Irene would name their first child Dorothy. I did notice in the subsequent census that by 1930, Morley and Maude Reading moved into their own household, with two children – Dorothy age 11 and Margaret age 6.)

I have one final clue on John Albert's departure from Baraga and arrival in Evanston. John Albert's granddaughter Linda has a small framed photo of him in her possession. It's a small photo, 2 ½' x 3 ½", taken of John Albert as a young man. I decided to use the photo for the cover page of this story. The photo is reproduced again below.



I took the photograph out of the frame to scan it for insertion into this story. To my surprise, I found a small card between the photo and frame. This is the card:



While not a handwriting expert, this appears to be the same signature as used on John Albert's 1917 draft card. "Albert Berg" is written in black ink, and "John" in blue. The "John" may have been added later. The card dates the photograph – February 28, 1916, and John Albert would have been 22 years old at the time.

While difficult to see in the scan, the card is embossed, likely with the name of the photography studio. Easier to read than the name is “Evanston, Ill.” Thus the photograph was probably taken in Evanston, in 1916. (Note: in the 1917 draft card, John Albert still claimed Baraga as his residence.)

All of this suggests that John Albert left Baraga sometime between 1916 and 1920, and in that period moved to Chicago and married Irene. This also suggests that John Albert attended school in Baraga.

This is a photo of the old Baraga high school, replaced by a new high school in about 1910. John Albert would have been high school age until around 1910 or 1911, and likely attended this school.



“Old” Baraga high school.

This photo shows the new high school, built around 1910 immediately next to the old high school.



The old and new Baraga High Schools, taken around 1910.

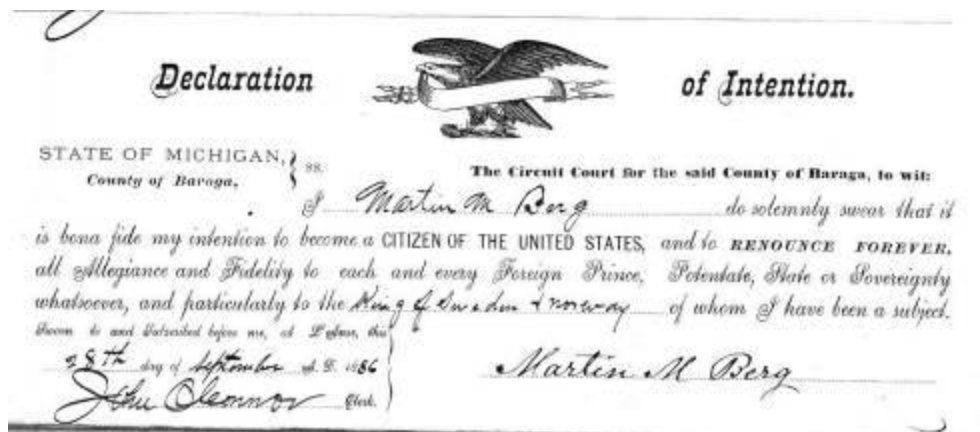
This is another photo of the “old” high school, taken around 1910. At this point, it was likely used by elementary students (the students in the photo appear especially

young). Depending upon the actual date of the photo, John Albert is not likely in the photograph, but one or more of his younger brothers might be.



Neither of these two school buildings remain in 2010.

I discovered one other document in the Baraga County basement closet. Within a dusty volume entitled “Declarations of Intention”, I found this declaration:



This declaration is one of the required steps to achieving U.S. citizenship. Signed on September 28, 1886, Martin M. Berg announced his intention to become a U.S. citizen, and renounced forever “all allegiance and fidelity to each and every foreign

prince, potentate, state or sovereignty whatsoever, and particularly to the King of Sweden & Norway”. (As an historical aside, Sweden and Norway were united under a single king between 1814 and 1905.)

There are a few more documents I would have liked to have found at the Baraga County courthouse (besides the property deeds). Presumably, Martin and Amelia were divorced sometime in the early 1900s. I could not find the early 20th Century divorce records. The county also maintains records of deaths. Although I found the early volume of death records, I did not find a record of the death of Clara Berg (which would likely have been between her birth record in 1895 and the 1900 census), or a record of the death of John Amundson (which would likely have been between the 1900 and 1910 census). Nor did I find a death record of Amelia Berg, although she may not have died in Baraga County. On balance, though, I did find a wealth of information about the Bergs in Baraga.

IV **The Bergs and Turlock, California**

John’s eldest daughter Dorothy (Betty’s sister) was interviewed in 2008 by Linda McDonnell by telephone. Dorothy confirmed that her grandfather was Martin Berg, and that her grandmother was Amelia Amundson, known as “Mellie”. Dorothy thought Martin’s full name was Martin Magenson Berg. He and Mellie had four sons – John Albert, George, Elmer and Bill.

Dorothy said that Martin left his wife and sons in Baraga to return to Sweden to pick up an inheritance. On the return trip, he met an unbelievable red head on the boat. After that, he never returned to Baraga. He and the redhead moved to Turlock, California, where he owned a general store and bought a lot of real estate. Much of this land was along the coast of California, including Laguna and Malibu. Dorothy thought he owned land under the present 20th Century Fox studios. Martin and the redhead also had a daughter.

He still maintained contact with his sons. He once told them that they should never mention their “first mother”, and that his new wife was their “new mother”.

Martin was a Shriner, and for a while lived in the Ahmed Temple in Oakland, California, across from the Golden Gate Bridge, and that he was the oldest living shiner at the temple. She recalls a story in which Martin was told that he had 24 hours to get out of Turlock.

Dorothy recalls seeing Martin and his new wife once as child. John Albert, Irene, Dorothy and Betty made the trip to California to see him, but never returned for another visit. Dorothy also recalls that she and Betty each received \$100 from Martin on their birthdays and other special occasions.

When Martin died, Dorothy recalled that he left \$4 to \$7 million to his wife and daughter. He left his sons \$10,000 each to go to college. Some man went after the Berg fortune, and took the daughter with him to Las Vegas. She disappeared, and most of the money went to this man.

Dorothy also recalls that John's mother, Amelia, ended up in California and ultimately died there.

I searched the internet for information on Martin Berg in Turlock, California. To my surprise, I found photographs of his store – both inside and out – from the California State University Stanislaus, University Library, Special Collections. Here are some of the photos:



This is a photo of Martin Berg's general store in Turlock, taken around 1903.

The caption under the preceding photo states: *“Originally from Sweden, M. M. Berg had this general store built by Gust Carlson and Ed Johnson in 1903 Turlock, California. This was one of the first to have large display windows and a wooden sidewalk in front of the store. Note the elevated one in the foreground. General merchandise could include not only such items as groceries, clothing, furniture but also buggies and farm equipment. The serrated cutting bars of the reapers can be seen displayed beside the store while the metal driver's seat, typical of farm machinery of this time period, is visible in the foreground.”*



This is a photograph of the expanded Berg store taken around 1910.

Per caption, "A group of women, men and children stand on the concrete sidewalk in front of the original portion of Berg's store that M. M. Berg had built in 1903 with a wooden sidewalk. Originally a general merchandise store, this photograph depicts the trend toward more specialized inventories that was beginning to occur. Verso: Berg store (Penney's site) corner Broadway & Main. Mrs. Cunningham (Mrs. Smith's Aunt) third from left."

Although not identified in the photo, it is quite possible that one of the gentlemen in the photograph is Martin Berg.



This is a photo of the interior of the store, also taken around 1910.

Per caption: *"This photo shows the ladies clothing portion of the Berg's store (clothing for each gender was kept separate). Originally a general store, by 1910 the inventory focused on clothing. At the rear of the store ready made dresses are displayed. Next to the glass counter on the right are two stools where women could sit while they were shown gloves or "undergarments" by a saleswoman. Note the display of feather and flower bedecked hats in the first case. On the counter above are two cushions full of the eight inch hat pins necessary to keep the hats in place when worn. The small sign reads: The McCall Large Fashion Book, Price 10 cents."*



This photo is identified as taken in the 1890s at West Main and Broadway, Turlock, which became the site of the Berg store.

Turlock is located in California's central valley, between Fresno and Sacramento, and about 100 miles southeast of San Francisco.



Martin returned to Sweden in 1923, as evidenced by this U.S. passport application, which I found online:

262778

DUPLICATE.

[FORM FOR NATURALIZED CITIZENS.]

No. _____
Issued _____

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PASS PORT
APR 3 1923
WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATE OF California
COUNTY OF Stanislaus Married 9th Jan 1885

MARTIN MAGNUS Berg, a NATURALIZED AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport for myself and my wife, Selma Cristina Berg born in Sweden on July 19th 1879

I solemnly swear that I was born at Bodane, Ed Sweden on or about the 3rd day of May 1865; that my father, Magnus Jonasson was born in Sweden and is now residing at Sweden; that I emigrated to the United States, sailing on board the Adriatic from Liverpool about June 1883; that I resided 40 years, uninterruptedly, in the United States, from 1883 to 1923 at Michigan 18 years, California 27 years that I was naturalized as a citizen of the United States before the Court Court of Lewis L'Ance at Saraga Michigan on May 22 1900 as shown by the accompanying Certificate of Naturalization; that I am the IDENTICAL PERSON described in said Certificate; that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at Furlock in the State of California where I follow the occupation of Merchant My last passport was obtained from Department of State June 22 1900 and was cancelle I am about to go abroad temporarily, and intend to return to the United States within one year (months) with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein; and that I desire a passport for use in visiting the countries hereinafter named for the following purpose:

Norway, Denmark Sweden Visit relatives
(Name of country.) (Object of visit.)

I intend to leave the United States from the port of New York sailing on board the Stockholm on 29th of May 1923

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God.

Martin M. Berg
(Signature of applicant.)

Sworn to before me this _____ day _____ 1923
of May 26 1923

88

Passport Agent, Department of State

Clerk of the _____ Court at San Francisco, California

Martin Berg 1923 passport application.

This document reveals a number of fascinating details:

1. The infamous “redhead” is identified as Selma Cristina Berg. Selma was born on July 19, 1879 in Sweden. In 1900 or so, when Martin and Selma met on board ship, Martin was about 35 and Selma about 21.
2. Although it is hard to read the date, it appears that Martin and Selma were married on January 9, 1903.
3. Martin states that his middle name is “Magnus”, not “Magnuson”.
4. Martin’s birthplace is Bodane, Ed, Sweden and his birth date is May 3, 1865.
5. Martin became a citizen at the L’Anse Courthouse on February 9, 1895. (L’Anse is the Baraga County seat).
6. Martin came to the U.S. aboard the Adriatic, from Liverpool, England, in June 1883.
7. Martin’s father’s name was Magnus Jonasson, who was born in Sweden but was deceased by the time of the passport application.
8. Martin originally received a passport on June 22, 1900. This pinpoints his trip back to Sweden for his inheritance. His application states that he lived 18 years in Michigan and 22 years in California, further pinpointing his move from Baraga to California at around 1900 or 1901.
9. Martin’s permanent residence in 1923 was Turlock, California, where he was a merchant. Martin submitted the application in San Francisco.
10. Martin was bound in 1923 to a trip aboard the Stockholm, from New York, for a one year visit of relatives in Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

The S.S. Adriatic, which transported Martin to America in 1883, was one of the White Star Line transatlantic steamships. It was built in Belfast, Ireland, in 1871, and made regular Liverpool – New York runs. This suggests that New York was Martin’s point of entry into the U.S. The Adriatic was deemed too old for transatlantic voyages in 1897, and was later sold for scrap in 1899. The Adriatic was White Star Line’s flagship vessel for a period of time, until replaced by larger vessels. White Star Line continued to build larger transatlantic steamships, most notably the S.S. Titanic.

Here is the S.S. Adriatic:



Photo of S.S. Adriatic. Note the one smokestack for the steam powered vessel, and four masts for sails – the vessel was powered by both steam and wind.



Painting of the S.S. Adriatic at sea.

The identification of the redhead as Selma Rosen led to another bit of information. Boston passenger records list Selma as aboard the S.S. Commonwealth, which departed Liverpool, England on October 4, 1900 and arrived in Boston, Massachusetts. The list was entitled “List or Manifest of Alien Immigrants for the Commissioner of Immigration”. Selma was 21 at the time. Her occupation was listed as “servant”. She could read and write. Her nationality was Swedish. She had \$75 with her when she landed in Boston. This was not Selma’s first trip to the U.S. Her last residence was listed as “Amerika”, and she had lived in the U.S. from 1895 to 1900.

There were some interesting questions on the passenger manifest. Whether ever in prison or almshouse or supported by charity, the answer was “no”. Whether a polygamist, the answer was “no”. Whether under contract, express or implied, to labor in the U.S., the answer was “no”. Condition of health, mental and physical, the answer was

“good”. Deformed or crippled, nature and cause, the answer was “no”. By whom was passage paid was “self”.

One additional question sheds light on Selma’s past, and her intentions. The question was “whether going to join a relative, and if so, their name and address”. There was a bracket next to the names of five people, giving virtually the same answer. These five were evidently traveling together – all going to 10 Wilson Place, Cleveland, Ohio. The four others were Emma Brandberg, single female, servant, age 40, going to her cousin Amanda Grik (the manifest was handwritten, and some words were difficult to decipher – the names appears to be Grik, but could be something else); Robert and David Person, ages 16 and 11, both male, going to their brother-in-law Carl Grik; and Maria Johnson, age 55, female widow, going to her daughter Amanda Grik. With them, on the manifest, were Carl and Amanda Grik, listed as citizens of the U.S.

For Selma, the answer to the same question was “Amanda Rosen”, at the same address – 10 Wilson Place, Cleveland, Ohio. It thus appears that Carl (age 31) and Amanda (age 25) Grik went back to Sweden from Cleveland, Ohio, and brought back Amanda’s cousin Emma, Carl’s brothers-in-law Robert and David, and Amanda’s mother Maria. It’s not clear whether Selma was brought along as a servant, or whether her mother was already with the Grik family in Cleveland.

In any event, Martin Berg was likely aboard the S.S. Commonwealth at the same time, and this is where Martin and the redhead first met. I did not see Martin listed on the manifest, but as a U.S. citizen, it may not have been required.

The S.S. Commonwealth was built in 1900 in Belfast, Ireland for the Dominion Line. The October 4, 1900 trip from Liverpool to Boston was its maiden voyage. The trip likely took seven days – long enough for Martin and Selma! The Commonwealth had capacity for 250 first class passengers, 250 second class, and 800 third class. I do not know which class Martin and Selma traveled. In 1903, the White Star Line took over Dominion’s Boston service. It renamed the Commonwealth the S.S. Canopic. (Note the “ic” ending, which was White Star’s trademark ship name, such as the Adriatic, Olympic, Britannic, and, of course, the Titanic.) The ship was used for passenger service until World War I, and then impressed into service as a troop transport. It saw a few more years as a passenger ship after the war, but was scrapped in Wales in 1925.

Here are a few postcards of the Commonwealth/Canopic ship.



The Stockholm, which Martin and Selma planned to sail from New York in 1923, was originally christened the S.S. Potsdam in 1900. As the Potsdam, it sailed regularly to and from Rotterdam, Netherlands, and New York. It was later sold by the Holland-America Line to the Swedish-America Line, re-named the S.S. Stockholm, and made regular passages between New York and Gotemburg, Sweden. The ship was later sold to the Norwegians, re-christened S.S. Solglimt; captured by the Germans in World War II and re-christened S.S. Sonderburg; scuttled by the Germans in France in 1944; and towed by the British to the United Kingdom for scrap in 1947.



This is a postcard of the S.S. Stockholm, with direct voyages between Gotenburg, Sweden and New York.

The passport application also confirms family lore that Martin Berg changed his name. John Albert used to say that his father was a merchant, and changed his name to “Berg” since it sounded Jewish. It was often difficult to tell when John was serious or joking, so this story may or may not be true. We had assumed that the name was “Bergman” or “Bergstrom”, or some other common Swedish name. It appears, though, that Martin was born “Jonasson”, and somewhere along the line – in Sweden or in the U.S. or in between – changed his name to “Berg”.

Martin first shows up in the Turlock, California census in 1910. By this time, he (at age 45) and Selma (31) have a child – Hazel, age 7. His occupation is listed as “retail merchant dry goods”, and hers as “saleslady dry goods”. Selma is listed as born in Sweden, with both parents born in Sweden. Hazel was born in California.

Martin, Selma and Hazel are listed again in the 1920 census, of course 10 years older. Martin’s occupation is listed as “proprietor dry goods store”, and Selma’s as “buyer dry goods store”.

Finally, the three are listed in the 1930 census in Turlock. Hazel is still living with Martin and Selma, at age 25. The occupation for all three is listed as “none”. By this time, Martin would have been 65.

There is a record of the tombstone of a Martin M. Berg at Turlock Memorial Park in Stanislaus County, California. It states date of birth as May 3, 1865, date of death March 21, 1961, which would have made him nearly 96 years old. The record identifies crypt 111-D CF; birth place unknown and place of death unknown; “f/o Miss Hazel Berg”; and “moved from Mt. View Cemetary, Oakland, California. I’m not sure what “f/o” means, but it appears that Hazel survived her father’s death; that Martin was originally buried in Oakland, and that Hazel had the grave moved to Turlock.

<http://files.usgarchives.net/ca/stanislaus/cemeteries/turlock-b-bj.txt>

This death information was confirmed by the California Death Index, which referred to Martin by his correct birth date, place, father's name, etc. The California index included one more bit of information – Martin's mother's maiden name was "Thorsten".

Selma and Hazel Berg both show up on the California Death Index as well. Selma died in Alameda, California, on January 13, 1974, at the age of 95. Hazel died November 10, 1995 in Stanislaus, California. The record shows her date of birth as August 1, 1902 – she died at the age of 93, and evidently never married. The record shows her mother's maiden name as "Rosen".

As I was wrapping up this project in December, 2010, I came across yet another interesting document online. This is Martin's passport application in 1900 for his intended departure from Baraga to Sweden, shown on the next page.

He signed the application in May, 1900, and the passport was issued on June 2. I already had most of the information shown on the application – his birth in Bodane, his arrival in New York aboard the Adriatic, his U.S. citizenship, his residence in Baraga, and his occupation as "store keeper". He stated in the application that he intended to return to the U.S. "within one year", which was long enough to pick up his inheritance.

(Form No. 205.)



No. 2007

Issued JUN 2 1900

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

STATE OF Michigan

COUNTY OF Baraga

I, Mathias M. Berg, a NATURALIZED AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport for myself, accompanied by

as follows: Myself born at Bohane, Gal. on the 3rd day of May, 1865; and Charles in New York July 4, 1888.

I solemnly swear that I was born at Bohane, Gal. on or about the 3rd day of May, 1865; that I emigrated to the United States, sailing on board the America, which sailed from Liverpool, on or about the 20th day of Sept., 1881; that I resided 16 years, uninterruptedly, in the United States, from July 11th 1897, at Baraga, Michigan; that I was naturalized as a citizen of the United States before the Circuit Court of Baraga County at Bohane, on the 9th day of January, 1898, as shown by the accompanying Certificate of Naturalization; that I am the IDENTICAL PERSON described in said Certificate; that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at Baraga, Mich. in the State of Michigan, where I follow the occupation of Store Keeper; that I am about to go abroad temporarily; and that I intend to return to the United States within one year with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: SO HELP ME GOD.

Sworn to before me this 2nd day of May, 1900
W. O. Beecher
Notary Public.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.

Age: 35 years. Mouth: ordinary
Stature: 5 feet 8 inches, Eng. Chin: —
Forehead: medium Hair: dark brown
Eyes: light blue Complexion: light
Nose: ordinary Face: fair

IDENTIFICATION.

I hereby certify that I know the above-named Mathias M. Berg personally, and know him to be the identical person referred to in the within-described Certificate of Naturalization, and that the facts stated in h.c. affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(ADDRESS OF WITNESS) Charles L. Sawyer
Baraga, Mich.

Applicant desires passport sent to following address:
Mathias M. Berg
Sorsängen
Polanda
(Edgob. Linn), Sweden

There are a couple of interesting additions to the story which can be gleaned from this application.

One is the description of Martin. At age 35, he was 5 feet, 8 inches tall. He had light blue eyes, dark brown hair, light complexion, and “fair” face. His nose and his mouth were both “ordinary”.

The other is the additional location in Sweden. Printed at the bottom of the document is “Applicant desires passport sent to following address”, and Martin put an address in Sweden in the blank spaces. This is a bit curious, since one would think that he would have needed a passport to travel to Sweden, rather than having the passport waiting for him when he got there.

But the address is informative nevertheless. The passport was to be sent to Martin at “Törsängen Rölunda Sweden”. Also written in parenthesis was “Elfsb. Län”. “Län” is “county” in Swedish, but I don’t know enough of the Swedish language or Swedish geography to locate “Elfsb. Län”. Rölunda is a community in Sweden, its location shown on the map below. At this point, I’m not sure whether Törsängen is a person’s name or a street name. All of this, though, will be helpful in a search for Martin’s roots within Sweden.

V The Family in Sweden

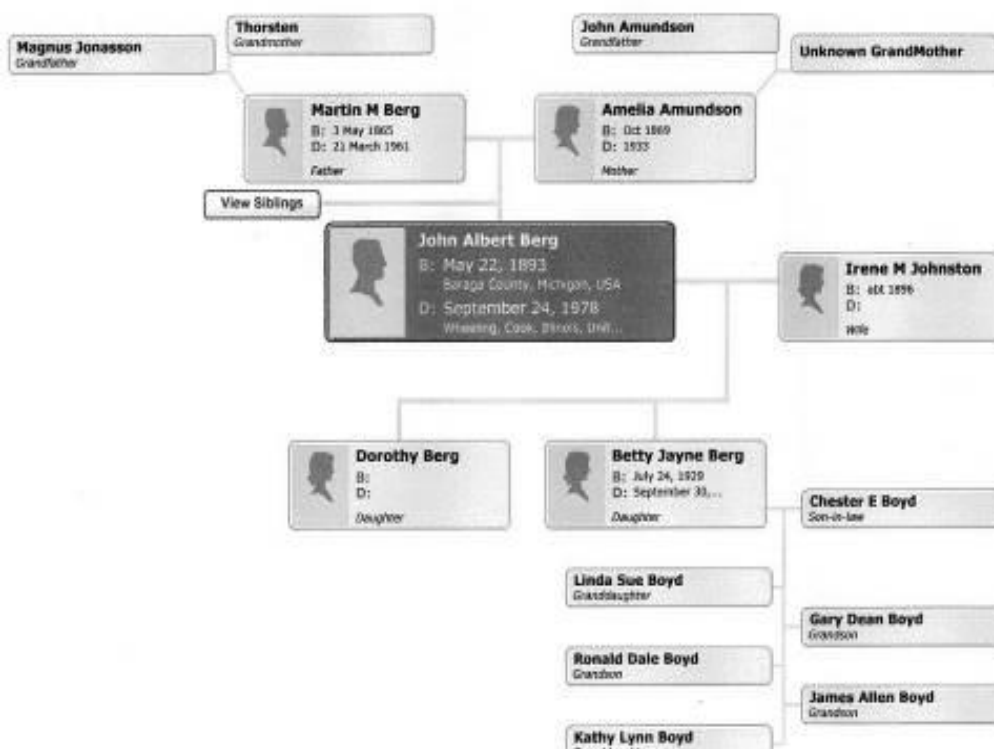
I know that Martin was born in Bodane, Ed, Sweden. The next map shows the approximate location of Bodane, as well as that of Rölunda.



Further research should focus on the families of both Martin Berg (and Magnus Jonasson) and Amelia Amundson in Sweden.

VI Berg Family Tree

This is the family view chart for John Albert Berg, from what is known to date:



VII Summary

From the evidence gathered, we can piece together a possible narrative for Martin and Amelia Berg, which makes for a very interesting story.

Martin Berg was born in Bodane, Sweden, in 1865, the son of Magnus Jonasson. In 1883, at the age of 18, he sailed from Liverpool to New York. Presumably, he came from a family of at least modest wealth. What prompted him to leave Sweden at such an early age is probably an interesting story. Sometime over the next ten years, he made his way to Baraga, Michigan. What he did in the interim, or why he chose to move to Baraga, is unknown.

John Amundson was born in Sweden in 1838, and had at least one child – Amelia, born in 1869. John immigrated to the United States in 1882 (at the age of 44), and Amelia followed in 1886 (at 17). At that age, it is likely that Amelia moved in with her father, who may already have been in Baraga.

Within five years of her arrival in the U.S., Amelia married Martin and they had their first child, Frederick. The 1890s in Baraga were especially eventful for Martin and Amelia. They had five children in the decade – Frederick, followed by John Albert, Clara, George and Elmer. They lost Clara. They started three different business ventures – a boarding house, a farm, and a grocery feed store. Martin became a United States citizen. The immediate family, together with Amelia's father John and boarders, lived together in town.

One would imagine that this would have been an exciting, but stressful decade for Martin and Amelia. What we don't know is what kind of people they were, or how happy they were together. But we know that their life together ended around 1900.

In 1900, Martin returned to Sweden to pick up an inheritance. On the return trip, he met Selma, the "redhead", and never returned to Baraga. He and Selma ended up in Turlock, California. Of all of the towns in the U.S., we don't know why they chose Turlock. They owned and ran a successful store there for several decades; probably bought a lot of other real estate in California; and had one child – Hazel. Somehow, the family fortune was lost. Selma died in Alameda, California in 1974, at the age of 95. Martin died in Alameda in 1961, at the age of 96. Hazel died in 1995 in Stanislaus, California at the age of 93.

Amelia and the boys remained in Baraga for another 20 years or so. The boys went to school there, and worked on the farm and in the store.

Sometime between 1917 and 1920, John (in his mid to late 20s) moved from Baraga to Evanston, Illinois, and married Irene Mae Johnston. He and Irene lived with Irene's mother, Irene's sister and brother-in-law, and a niece. John worked as a government surveyor. Within a decade, John and Irene would have two daughters – Dorothy and Betty. John spent the rest of his adult life in the Chicago area.

This is but one chapter of the story. At least three others need to be researched and written. One takes place in Sweden, with the history of Martin's and Amelia's families. Knowledge of Martin's birthplace will help in gathering that history, as will knowledge of family names (Berg, Jonasson, Thorsten, Amundson). Martin's family must have been one of substantial means, or else Martin would not have returned to Sweden to pick up his inheritance.

Another takes place in California. Martin evidently made, and lost, a fortune there. He also had a long history with the Masons. These should make for interesting stories.

The third takes place in Evanston and Chicago, Illinois, with the adult life of John Albert Berg. He was a fascinating and unique individual, and I am certain that there are many stories to tell.