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Letters of the Rev. and Mrs. Olof Olsson, 1869-1873,
Pioneer Founders of Lindsborg
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INTRODUCTION

THE history of Lindsborg is intimately associated with the Rev. and Mrs. Olof Olsson, who came to the Smoky valley of central Kansas with a large group of Swedish immigrants in June, 1869. Only a few Swedes had settled in the area when the Olsson party arrived. On April 17, 1868, the First Swedish Agricultural Company of McPherson county had been organized in Chicago, Ill., by individuals who had been closely associated with Olsson in Sweden. This company purchased land in southern Saline and northern McPherson counties. Olsson was urged by the leaders of this company to come to Kansas and settle in the Smoky valley. Approximately 250 people from various parishes in Värmland joined the Olsson party, although less than half of them finally settled in the Lindsborg area.

Olsson was 28 years old when he arrived in the future Lindsborg settlement. Mrs. Olsson was a little younger than her husband. The young couple identified themselves completely with their people and with pioneer life in Kansas. Olsson, a graduate of Uppsala University in Sweden and a former student at Leipzig University in Germany, was a man of many talents. He was a fine organist and his devotion to music prepared for the establishment later of the famous Lindsborg "Messiah" by Dr. and Mrs. Carl A. Svensson. Olsson founded the Bethany Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lindsborg, on August 19, 1869. He served as the first superintend-
ent of public instruction of McPherson county and as a representative for two terms from McPherson county in the Kansas legislature. He left Lindsborg in 1876 to become a professor at Augustana College and Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill., and later served as president. Olsson had a distinguished career as an educator, theologian, and writer. He died in 1900. Mrs. Olsson passed away in 1887.2

2. The Letters, 1869-1873

Salina, Saline Cy., Kansas, North America, via Hamburg,
September 11, 1869.

Brother C. W. Weinberg!

A letter from Mrs. Weinberg gave us much joy in providing news from Smedemo.3 I believe that my wife wrote to Mrs. Weinberg about our trip. . . . The stay in New York was the worst of the whole trip. I walked around one evening on the finest as well as on the poorest streets. What scenes during that little journey! As soon as I came out of New York, I began to breathe better. The further I came into the West, the more pleasant I found it. The West is best for the person who is seeking a home. The East’s large cities offer a rich field for clever money lovers. The West with its large stretches of fertile, unclaimed land is a rich field for the industrious farmer, who is not afraid in the early years to subject himself to toil and difficulties.

You should see our settlement out here.4 It is a beautiful sight. Prairie and still more prairie. Here and there a line of green trees on both sides of the winding Smoky Hill River or in the small valleys where the water seeks an outlet. The view of the prairie is at the outset dismal. Many who come, overwhelmed by this dreary prairie, do not take time to dig a hole in order to observe the rich soil, which nourishes the luxuriant grass. They turn back immediately, or devote themselves to idle sorrow. The only thing they do is to write long lamentations to Sweden. Others, with greater maturity, stay over night where best they can, secure later a spade, dig a cave, cover it as well as they can, secure some food for the family,

3. Smedemo is a village and parish in the province of Värmland, Sweden. The Rev. Olaf Olson was serving as the pastor of this parish when the Olsson party immigrated to Lindsborg in May, 1869. The letter designates Salina as Olson’s address since a post office was not established at Lindsborg until December 1, 1869.

4. The First Swedish Agricultural Company of McPherson county, which was organized at Chicago on April 17, 1868, had purchased 13,160 acres of land in the southern part of Saline and in the northern part of McPherson counties. This land and available areas under the Homestead Act furnished the basis for the Lindsborg colony.—Emory Kempton Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, a History of Lindsborg, Kansas (Lindsborg, 1935), pp. 33-39.
leave them in the dugout, and go in search of work. If only they keep well, it goes forward one year after the other. It has been wonderful this summer to see the large seeded fields, which a few years ago belonged to the buffalo and Indians. The crop in Kansas has really been excellent this year, although our settlement has not profited much from it, since all of us have just arrived.

We are using Winter wheat here for the first time. Plowing and harrowing are going on with all strength. Maize, which some planted in the Spring on newly plowed soil, is wonderfully beautiful. I stood one day and examined the soil, which my brother is now plowing for the second time (it was broken for the first time in May and June). It looks like a well-worked and fine garden plot. Here houses are being built with all possible haste, and we all heartily rejoice over all the neighbors’ houses that we see. Thus we work here, each in his own way, we meet often and encourage one another with the Word of God, and consult together on various mundane things. We do not dig gold with pocket knives, we do not expect to become bountifully rich in a few days or in a few years, but what we aim at is to own our own homes, where each one has his own property, which with God’s blessings will provide him with the sustenance which he and his family need. We are like the old Swedish yeoman in our freedom and independence even with respect to a dwelling house and equipment. The advantage which America offers is not to make everyone rich at once without toil and trouble, but the advantage is that the poor, who will and are able to work, secure a large piece of good land almost without cost, that they can work up little by little and become after a few years the owners of property, which rival large estates in Sweden when one takes into account the labor costs and income. The difficulties at the outset are so great that not every person has the courage to overcome them. The best plan is for several acquaintances to settle in a tract, where they can encourage and help each other. That is the situation here.

We have no fear of Indians here. It is not impossible that they could attack, but if God protects us, we are without danger. Moreover, our settlement is so large and we are surrounded on all sides by settlers, that the Indians will not gladly venture among us, es-

5. Olson arrived in the Lindsborg community on June 27, 1860. The S. S. Columbia of the Anchor line, on which the Olson party booked passage from Scotland, arrived in New York on June 8. Olson spent some time in Chicago, Moline, and Rock Island, Ill., before proceeding to Lindsborg. The majority of his party arrived in Lindsborg before the middle of June.—Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

6. The Olson party included many relatives and friends from various parishes in Värmland. Entire family units immigrated to the Smoky valley. Included in the Olsons’ party were his parents and a brother, Carl.
especially since there are not many woods for a hiding place. We live south of Salina. The massacre you read about in the newspapers occurred many miles northwest of Salina in the outlying districts, where they say that the Indians had been irritated by buffalo hunting.\(^7\) The buffalo has not been seen where we are for many years. Some friendly Indians used to come and beg in the Autumn along the river. I haven’t seen any yet. We see the river as a green half-circle some few English miles away.\(^8\)

My travelling companions from Sunnemo and Ransäter went to work in Missouri, since I did not venture to advise them to go to Kansas immediately. There is now plenty of employment in Kansas. They have taken land in Missouri. Land is expensive there. They have had to pay money for land and have therefore had a hard time during the first year. They would have done better to come here in the Autumn and take homestead land. That was my intent for them. They were in too big a hurry, I think, and were misled by greedy land agents, who are a real plague in America. These men praise their land in order to sell it and run down other places for great damage to the immigrants. I haven’t had time to visit Missouri.\(^9\)

Greet all. Write soon. How are my affairs in Sunnemo? You can expect letters at the outset expressing dissatisfaction, but wait a year and you will hear another song! America can be described according to preference and taste. Here is much evil, but also much good. Here are great difficulties, but also great advantages.

\[\ldots\] Greet Svanberg and tell him that I shall write to him.

With affection and esteem.

O. Olsson

Salina, Kansas. September 15, 1869.

Mrs. Ulrika Weinberg

Hearty thanks for the letter to Anna. Anna planned to write, but early this morning the Lord sent us a little, healthy girl, which development hinders Anna from writing. Through the Lord’s wonderful mercy everything went especially well at the delivery, and

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\(^7\) The Indian massacre occurred in May, 1869, when 14 settlers, including several Danes, were killed by Indians in Lincoln County about 40 miles northwest of Lindberg.—C. Bernhardt, *Indian Raids in Lincoln County, Kansas, 1864 and 1869* (Lincoln, Kan., 1910), pp. 28-33, 53, 54.

\(^8\) The reference to “English miles” is to distinguish this unit of measurement from the “Swedish mile,” which is the equivalent of seven “English miles.” The Olson home was approximately three “English miles” from the Smoky Hill River.

\(^9\) The majority of the 250 members of the Olson party failed to reach Lindberg. They settled in Linn county, north of Bucklin, Mo. It was planned that they should work on the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad until autumn and then come to Lindberg. Instead they purchased land in the Bucklin area and settled there permanently.—Enory Lindquist, “The Swedes of Linn County, Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review*, Columbia, v. 45 (1950-1951), pp. 138, 149.
Anna is very well under the circumstances. Anna thrives especially well here. We live for the time being in a two room stone house, which Anna finds so pleasant that she does not want to move from it. Meanwhile, we have now begun to build our own stone house with three rooms and so high that we can have a gable room. The kitchen is always built here next to the house proper, since the heat in the summer makes a fire inside the rooms unbearable. We have no plantings yet around our house, since we are surrounded on all sides by what is called flat prairie, that is fields with long, luxuriant grass. If we live until next year, we intend to plant trees and grow flowers as much as possible. We have here the advantage that everything grows with unusual haste. There are also found here a mass of different kinds of trees and flowers, which encourages planting. From the river, which lies a few English miles from our place, we can bring home various kinds of trees for planting. Among other things wild grapes and good plums grow here.

We find it really very pleasant here, although everything is still in its beginning. The life of the pioneer is truly difficult in many respects. His work-wagon is for a long time during the first year his hotel, kitchen, salon, bedroom, and church. Such is often the situation among the Americans. We Swedes are more comfortable. One often sees a wagon covered with canvas going through the towns or unoccupied tracts. Therein the pioneer transports his family several hundred miles. There is never a question of renting a house. He says like the philosopher: “All I own I take with me” and thus he takes care of himself. Having arrived at his land he places some logs, one upon the other, on which he places sod. This he calls his home and lives there with his family many years.

I have seen many farmers with such extensive fields and such large herds of cattle that one should be ready to say: “Here must be a Count’s estate,” but when one looks for the castle, one finds a house that Mrs. Weinberg would look upon at her farm as suitable for a pig-sty at best. One might think that swinish men lived in such swine houses, but that is not the situation. There one meets often men with knowledge and refinement so that they hold a position in the State’s legislative assembly. People in Sweden look upon the Americans as a crowd of wild men and barbarians. This is an error. True, barbarians are found here, bandits of the first class, but I have already met many Americans, for whom I hold the highest respect as men. Although the real American is in his manner forward and unceremonious, so is he nevertheless pleasant and friendly in his associations. I have already enjoyed with many
an obliging hospitality which has astonished me. Always when I ask Americans how they like it when so many other nationalities come to their country, they answer in such a manner, that even in this situation they wish to acknowledge the principle of equality. America has its bright sides, but it also has its dark sides; now it depends on opinion and degree of contentment which of these things one paints black or white. There are few who can express a moderate opinion. However, life in America is never so pleasant under any circumstances as in a settlement where a man has good friends and neighbors. Those who lack this advantage are terribly lonesome at the beginning and wish to return home immediately, that is some of them.

Whatever may be the situation relative to earthly advantages in America or Sweden, there is one advantage which is equally great in both countries, and that is the grace of Jesus Christ for poor sinners. Without Jesus we are ruined, wherever we are in the world, or however fortunate our outward circumstances may be. Think what it is to be a poor, unworthy sinner, but at the same time to be blessed and holy in Jesus Christ through grace. Who is there that can compensate or pay back the reward of having a firm hope of eternal blessedness, based on Jesus, Saviour? Hearty greetings from all of us.

Affectionately,

O. Olsson

Adr. Lindsborg P. O. McPherson C, Kansas,
North America, via Hamburg, May 13, 1870

Esteemed Brother Weinberg!

Thanks for the letter, which I received a long time ago. I often think of you and have many times planned to write, but I have negligently delayed and delayed. Time goes so fast here, that I hardly have time to turn around, as they say, before a month has fled by. That situation is based largely upon the many occupations which I have here. I am a clergyman, “farmer”—, yes, the enumeration of my different activities should make an announcement just as strange as the auction announcements that one many times has the honor to read from the pulpit in Sweden.10

We have had a very beautiful winter here, dry, wherefore the

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10. It was customary for pastors in Sweden to read many items from the pulpit. Included were official documents, auction announcements, declarations of intention to immigrate to America, marriage bans, etc. It has been pointed out that these many announcements were read so rapidly that the expression “as fast as the reading of an official announcement in church” was in current usage.—George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis, Minn., 1932), pp. 3, 4.
general work could proceed almost without interruption. Occasionally we have had a few days of the most penetrating north wind, but most of the time the temperature has been about right so that one is well dressed with a vest and coat. The Kansas climate is really pleasant in the word's full meaning although certain days in the Winter are highly unpleasant on account of the cold wind. The Summer is warm with almost always a constant fresh breeze, the evenings and nights pleasantly cool, the Autumn dry and clear with cool air almost until Christmas, the Winter changeable with some days of violent snow storms and several weeks of clear, calm, just right cool air. The Spring is sometimes violently stormy with enormous rain storms which you could not possibly imagine and after the rain, delightful greenness. We have had the most favorable weather for the crop year. All the crops now have the most promising prospects. What the Summer and harvest time will bring, we naturally do not know yet. Rye is fully headed out by the beginning of May. The Winter wheat now begins to show some heads. The rye appears astonishingly beautiful. All the work we do with it is to plow the virgin prairie in the Summer, plow it again in September, seed, harrow, and roll.

What has been most distressing for me is that the majority of my party stayed in Missouri, where a few bought railroad land and paid 10 dollars an acre. Here they could still secure the most beautiful land without woods for 20 dollars for 160 acres including everything. My intention was that they should remain in Missouri over the Summer, until I got established here in Kansas. Awful rumors about Indians made it so I did not dare to advise them to come here immediately. Meanwhile, predatory, greedy land agents had fooled them to take railroad land in Missouri. The soil is undoubtedly good in Missouri, but the climate is not as good as here and all that they had to pay for the land there they could put here upon cultivation and similar things. Meanwhile, it will take much more time in Missouri than it would here until they can get things under control.

I must truthfully say that I view the prospects here as much brighter than in Sweden, but in no case do I wish to persuade anyone to come over here, since the trip and the first period here have so many incalculable difficulties that weaker spirits can become completely distraught. American life presents very many differences in contrast with life in Sweden. Since I have already partici-

11. The situation of Olson's friends is described in Lindquist, "The Swedes of Linn County, Missouri," loc. cit., pp. 140-143.
pated in several civic meetings (or should we call them political), where equality prevails, Sweden should, if I returned there, seem to me quite out of date relative to the question of the right to vote. It seems very strange to me here to reflect on Sweden’s election meetings, where the votes must be counted with so much trouble. One wonders how it is possible that such an enlightened country as Sweden can retain such a monstrosity as in the troublesome, divisive voting system. It will be interesting to hear the news that every Swedish citizen is equal to every other one at the ballot box.12

Greet all heartily from me. Especially greet Brors family.

In brotherly friendship

O. Olsson

Lindsborg, August 11, 1870.

Dearly beloved Ulrika

It is now a long time since I have received a letter from Ulla, but since we wrote on May 12 and sent it to Sweden, I thought that the letters crossed, and if I should write again, perhaps I would receive another letter. I think it is real fun to receive letters from Ulla in Sweden and learn some news from dear Sunnemo. Ulla wrote on May 11. I remember that sad day a year ago.13

Dear Ulla! Believe me, I have it very good here, and Olle even better in one sense, namely, there is a brighter outlook for the future for him here than in Sweden; but Sweden still lives in life-like memory for me. Beautiful Sweden, whose forests, mountains, and valleys, in a word, everything is more pleasant there than here. . . .

I shall now tell you about the harvest we have had. Olle has had seven acres of Winter wheat, but we haven’t threshed it yet so I do not know how much it will be, but it looks like it will be very much. We had planted only one bushel of rye and we received 25 bushels which are threshed and some remains yet. We have had many vegetables. The maize is now very tall, it is certainly ten feet high. Did Ulla plant the corn which I sent? I have sent two ears of corn to Ulla and one to Mrs. Louise Kolthoff and one to Mamsell Jiana Geijer. I thought it was fun to show you how large maize is. I asked an acquaintance who visited us last Spring (he was from Örebro) to take these ears to Sweden. He was a pro-

12. The reference is to the pattern of voting in Sweden, which by a decision in 1866 was granted to males only with an annual income of 800 crowns or more. Universal suffrage prevails today for adults 21 years of age and older. General suffrage for males was introduced in 1900 and for females in 1921. The year 1909 witnessed the inauguration of the system of proportional representation. In 1918 all property qualifications for local suffrage were abolished.—Nordisk Familjebok, 1923-1937 (Stockholm, 1957), p. 859.
13. This reference is associated with the date of departure from Sunnemo for Kansas.
THE REV. AND MRS. OLOF OLSSON
McPherson County Pioneers and Founders of Lindsborg

MAIN STREET IN LINDSBORG IN THE 1870'S
**The Rev. Olof Olsson's Homestead**
A Birger Sandzén lithograph reproduced by courtesy of Mrs. Birger Sandzén.

**The First Church at Lindsborg**
This church was built in 1869 under the supervision of the Rev. Olof Olsson. The etching, by G. N. Malm, is reproduced through the courtesy of Mrs. G. N. Malm.
fessing Christian and if any one wants to know how it goes for us here, he would give a description which would be true. If Ulla could meet Colporteur Nyvall, it might be possible that he had paths to Örebro and could bring the ears of corn.14 The man who was with us became much enthused about Kansas, and thinks of coming here and take land. Dear Ulla! It is a time of unrest in Europe now. Perhaps the Swedes will become involved in the war.15 If times become full of anxiety I think that it is best to come here and take land so perhaps I will thrive better, if my dear old friends and neighbors come here!!

I should surely tell you how we have it in our home. It hasn’t gone fast to get furniture. I do not yet have a chest of drawers, but I hope to receive one soon. Windows and doors have been painted a beautiful brown oak and the floor in Olle’s room is even painted, and all the floors are to be painted, since that will protect the floors (which are so expensive), so that they don’t need to be scrubbed. I have asked Olle to get us a brick fire-place for our living room, which would mean much to me, otherwise we use stoves made of iron. Now I must close my careless letter for this time. Hearty greetings from Olle and Christin.

Your devoted friend
Anna Olsson

I am waiting for a letter from Ulla!!! Greet Gerda when you meet her, as well as Koltthoffs. Memory verse: David’s Psalm 119. Olle has now received a riding horse as a present so that he can ride when he visits the members of his congregation. I now have 32 baby chicks together with 10 full-grown hens so I soon hope to get some eggs.

Lindsborg, December 17, 1870

Dearly beloved Ulla

Hearty thanks, dear Ulla, for your most recent letter as well as for the gifts of love which followed soon. It was altogether too much dear friend to sacrifice so much work and trouble for us. However, they have been of great value to us. Olle wears the beautiful sweater every day of the week and it is not at all too warm here in the Winter to have wool under the other clothes; since it is very changeable weather here, one must be very careful

14. Colporteur Karl Johan Nyvall was an intimate friend of Olsson’s in Sweden. They were both läsare (readers) in the Pietist movement. Karl Johan Nyvall was the father of the Rev. David Nyvall, well-known leader in the Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of North America and a president of North Park College, Chicago. David Nyvall was president of Walden College, McPherson, during the brief history of that institution under the sponsorship of the Mission Covenant Church.—A description of the läsare is found in Stephenson, op. cit., pp. 24-48.

15. The Franco-Prussian War broke out on July 19, 1870.
when it comes to clothes. And my skirt, it is invaluable to me. It was, I say, again, great joy for all of us when the letter and package arrived; most of all because we see that we are not forgotten by the dear friends in Sunnemo. How wonderful it would be if we could see one another in this life. That should be my hearty wish. Christin and I often talk about Sunnemo and how much fun it would be if we could travel silently to that dear church. Thanks be to the Lord for the time which has passed. He will not leave us from this time forth is His promise.

It is now Sunday evening. Olle had thought of travelling to Salina today (several Swedes live around there and he goes there occasionally) but it snowed (for the first time this year) so much that it was impossible to travel by wagon, and to ride was even hard since the snow was the kind which stuck to the horses’ hooves. The snow has been on the ground for three days, it usually doesn’t last longer than 4-5 days so quickly does it melt away here. Instead he held a prayer meeting in the town which is an English mile from here and later in the evening there is to be choir practice. They have started one here! and it appears that people are very glad to participate in it. Do you still sing in Sunnemo? . . .

The 22nd. Now there is severe Winter here so that I have scarcely known more severe in Sweden.

Affectionately
Anna Olsson

Lindsborg, June 28, 1871

Dearly beloved Ulla!

I should have written to you a long time ago, but I have always been prevented from doing so, since we now have harvest time and that involves a few more people. I also have only one young girl to help me so I must share very much myself in the work. Excuse my delay. My dear friend! I take this time the boldness and will say “du” to Ulla. Ulla has herself suggested it, but I have not looked upon it as being suitable for me to say “du” to Ulla. I am really convinced of Ulla’s friendship toward me, I rejoice over it, and I wish now with this “du” more personally and heartily to establish our bond of friendship. First of all I thank you so personally and heartily for all the gifts which you have sent all of us through Gustaf Olson. He came here on June 9. Dear Ulla! What

16. Olsson was a fine musician and organist. Shortly after his arrival in the Smoky valley a choir was organized. The great “Messiah” tradition at Lindsborg, which traces its origin to 1881, was based on this early interest in music, which was developed by Olson.

17. The Swedish language provides two terms—Ni and Du—for the English pronoun you. Ni is a term of respect; Du is an intimate usage.
does it mean that you sacrifice so indescribably much for old friends who are so very far away? Oh dear, my eyes moisten with tears of joy when I know that we are still remembered in the dear homeland. In Ulla I have definite evidence of it. But I say once again, you should not have given us so much—if it had only been a pair of stockings this would likewise have been evidence that we were still in your memory; but now such a large present, and it looks as if it was all hand-made. I said when I saw the beautiful scarf and stockings that if Ulla made all that herself, I think that she hasn't had time to do anything more than work for us. A pair of stockings have already been tried by Olle who thinks they are just right. The red piece of goods was enough for dresses for both Anna and Mia, and they wore them for the first time on Midsummer Day. The woolen goods will be just right if we live until Winter. There is enough for both of them. I know also that you my dear friend wish to share in the spirit which is motivated by love. Then shall the Lord say to you as He did to Cornelius in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10.

I must tell you, praise the Lord, that we are in good health. The small girls are well. Little Mia speaks as clearly as I do. Sometimes both she and I were in poor health but it was because I was still nursing her. I decided then to wean her, but that was not so easy, since she was so large. I didn't think that children at that age had sorrow but I really got to see it with Mia. She sorrowed so that at times she wrung her hands. On Sunday when all were at church and the children and I were alone, Mia begged me that I "take her a little." I took her and she had sorrow alright. When I went away from her she said so distressingly: "Poor Baby! Poor Baby!" (pronounced Bebi). The Americans call their children "Baby." Since she is now weaned we are in good health.

You will want to know how it looks out here in Kansas. There has been such ample rain that the soil is soaked so that this year the grass is green and tall, but yet is not so tall as the first year we were here, since then it was taller almost everywhere than I am, but now it scarcely reaches to my stomach. Almost every day they go past here with thousands of cattle from Texas. I wish that you were here and could see a line which we saw an hour ago when there was such a long stretch of cattle that it was more than an English mile in length and wider than the main road at Sunnemo. They went the route past here since they were driving the cattle to the town of Ellsworth which is located 12 miles from here, in
order to ship them on the railroad.\textsuperscript{18} The maize is also very beautiful and already much taller now than I am, you know it gets so tall it looks like a large forest in the Summer where there is maize and one is close to it. We have also planted “molasses corn” or sugar-cane. We will see if we get much this year. One presses such stalks when they are almost ripe and the juice is sweet, and then it is cooked until it is well thickened and it is the same as syrup in Sweden. I tell about this for fun because I can imagine that you think it interesting to know how it is done, although one does not grow such things in Sweden. I now have 37 chickens but expect more soon. The other day we lost 16 chickens one night presumably rats or snakes which are found on the prairie took them.

Do you know that I have been deceiving in one case when I wrote a letter to you. I said in the first letter that we have 4 rooms in addition to a kitchen but we have used one room for a kitchen; but just now there is a man here who is building us a neat kitchen out of boards, so that we can move out the stove since it is too warm to have it inside in the Summer. Day before yesterday was the warmest day we have had this Summer; one could really fear getting sun stroke if one went outside. It is generally very warm here in the Summer and almost impossible to go out in the middle of the day. Olle went to Missouri a week ago today and will be gone 14 days. He is going to travel around and preach. He is going to call on the people from Munkfors who settled there.

\textsuperscript{19} Pray the Lord to give us His grace, that we might once meet at God’s right hand, with those He has given us. I must now close my letter with a hearty and warm greeting to all of you from all of us. The Lord Jesus be our light and strength!

Your true friend

Anna Olsson

Last week they cut both Winter wheat and rye here and since it is cut by machine many people are needed for binding and putting up the crop. They help one another around here, so it goes quickly. Excuse my poor writing.

\textsuperscript{18} Mrs. Olsson often was in error in reference to distances in Kansas. Ellisworth is approximately 45 miles from Lindsborg.

\textsuperscript{19} Olsson carried on an extensive itinerant ministry in various parts of Kansas and in some Swedish settlements in Missouri and Colorado. His “Baptismal Book,” 1869-1876, shows that he baptized 440 children during that period. The parents of only 150 were members of the Bethany Lutheran church, Lindsborg, where Olsson was pastor.—Lindquist,\

\textit{Smoky Valley People}, pp. 53, 54.
Undated letter

Dearly beloved Ulla

Greet Mr. Weinberg and say that if he comes here he can join in a buffalo hunt. The other day several people here went on a buffalo hunt with several horses and wagons—they shot 12. Soon they are going out again and my father and brother John will go with them.

Kind Ulla! Write soon and tell me if Ulla has written to me and if my letter was received (that of June 29). We have had beautiful maize this year, enough so that we can amply feed horses, hogs, and chickens. We have also had an abundant harvest of wheat, rye, and oats.

They are now in process of building a water mill here so soon we will not be forced to go so far to a mill. I have such poor ink which accounts for such poor writing. Ulla will excuse me? Olle has gone to a settlement called Mariadahl, where Swedes live who have been there for 15 years. They say they are very rich. Now I must close for this time. Heartly greetings from us.

Anna

Lindsborg, McPherson Co, Kansas, July 7, 1873

Dear brother Weinberg!

Having just arrived home after a journey of several weeks I have just now read your welcome letters. Since the mail is just now leaving, I must curtail my letter to just a few lines. I shall soon write again. I shall send the newspapers next week. I will pay the postage. You can believe how dear it was for us to hear something from you. I very often remind myself of Sunnemo. I must also acknowledge that I experience a longing to see my old friends again, but such weak feelings must be stricken away. Nevertheless my heart experiences an inner joy, when I hear something from the

20. This letter was undoubtedly written in November or December, 1871. Another letter under date of October 23, 1871, refers to an unanswered letter of June 29, so it must have been after October 23, 1871. The reference to the age of the Mariadahl community would make it in 1873. The earlier date is more likely on the basis of internal evidence.

21. Financial support for the mill project was apparently inadequate. On January 17, 1872, Olson introduced house bill No. 116 in the Kansas house of representatives. "An Act to Authorize Smoky Hill Township, McPherson County to aid a Flouring mill." On February 16, 1872, it passed the house on third reading by a vote of 63 to zero, but no action was taken in the senate. The closest mill was 20 miles away at Salina.—Lindquist, Smoky Valley People, p. 157.


23. The newspaper referred to was Nytt Och Gammelt (New and Old) which was written, edited, and published by Olson. The first issue of this religious publication of 30 pages appeared in April, 1875. Six issues were published from April to November, 1875. It was printed in Salina, with German type. Nytt Och Gammelt was the first Swedish journal to be published in Kansas. It was merged in 1873 with the Swedish religious periodical Augustana, founded in 1868.—Olsen, op. cit., pp. 93, 106.
district which is so dear to me. Meanwhile, I have a large field of labor here and must by God's grace do something while it is still day. You have assumed altogether too much trouble for my sake, and it really disturbs me that I cannot show my gratitude, such as I gladly would do. If my little paper would be of some little use even in Sunnemo, that would truthfully be a great joy to me. It cannot but give me joy that you still remember me. I wish to acknowledge that such tokens of remembrance and love cause me to feel a childish joy.

We are all in good health. Greet all heartily from us! I will write more next time and my wife plans to write. We have often spoken of you, after we last heard from you.

With friendship and love.

O. Olsson

Lindsborg, August 12, 1873

Dearly esteemed Friend!

The Lord is our light and strength!

For your last letter (which I received Midsummer's Eve) I wish to thank you most heartily! I certainly have not forgotten you dear friend, while I am always slow in writing; but I have often written to you in my thoughts. Yes, we often speak about you here and I wish that the distance was not so great but that we could see one another sometime. Little Anna said once when we first arrived here that it was 3 Swedish miles to Sunnemo. How wonderful if that were true since then truly we could call on one another often. If it is God's will we will get to see one another once in this life. Nevertheless time rests in God's hand. You are welcome at our home first!!! Then perhaps we will journey to dear Sunnemo and call on you. If we live and God wills it. "With God nothing is impossible."

I must now begin by saying that the Lord has by His grace led and supported us to this hour. It goes nevertheless wonderful with God's guidance toward us when I really think that it goes completely against what I wish, but "God's ways are not our ways." I wish to tell you especially that the Lord God gave us a healthy son Midsummer's Day a year ago. It was then our great joy to see this dear child, since he showed himself to have good understanding and I felt that I attached myself so much to him. He received in holy

24. Midsummer day, June 24, was a festive day in Sweden. It often was a point of reference in dating events in that season of the year. The traditions associated with Midsummer day were maintained in the early period of Lindsborg's pioneer history. The origin of Midsummer day is described in R. Chamber's, Book of Days (London and Edinburgh, N. D.), v. 1, pp. 814-817.
baptism the dear name Johannes (according to the day). But the Lord loved him still more and took him to Himself when he was only a month and two days old. I lacked so in judgment and grieved so much that I became ill as a result. I had really wanted to write to you about it, but I grieved so much that I could not gather my thoughts and write. Later the girls became ill and I really thought that the Lord would take little Maria from us since she was in poor health the entire Autumn, but now both girls are well and spry. The Lord be thanked and praised.

I will now say that the Lord has not yet tired of us but we can say that His mercy and grace are new over us every morning. We are dealt with not as we deserve but we receive everything by grace. If you dear friend will look up David's Psalm 103 you will recognize that the Lord deals with us as it is stated in the Psalm. Yes, now you will likely wish to hear something further how we have it. Therefore I will tell about various things although it is perhaps only in vanity.

We now have a new house built for us. Our former house was cold and unpleasant, so we could not live there since it was so poorly built. The congregation realized this and offered to build a better house at their own expense. We now live in the new one and it was finished a year ago. There are warmer and more pleasant rooms in this house. It is the same size as the one at Noretorp, exclusive of the hall, hence, 3 rooms and kitchen on the lower level and one upper room (Olle's is ready) and so there will be such a room in the other gable together with closets on the sides. We also have an excellent basement under the house. You should come here soon and call on us and see something here in America. I mean it seriously! You would not regret it!!

This year it has rained much, so that everything which grows has been very beautiful, the grass is very tall this year, but not so tall as the first Summer. All the farmers here in Kansas have received an abundant harvest of rye and wheat, and the maize (corn) is very beautiful. I used to say I did not know why I was in America before this year but now has the Lord blessed our crops and animals in all ways so I do not have great troubles as mistress of the household. You will surely not make fun of me if I in all simplicity

25. The days of the year are given names in Sweden. For instance, January 16, Hjalmar; January 17, Anton; January 18, Hilda, etc. June 24, the date of the birth of the Olssons' son, was the day of John the Baptist, hence the name in Swedish, Johannes.

26. This house still stands on the southwest quarter of sec. 6, Smoky Hill township, three miles northwest of Lindsborg. The late Dr. Birger Sandzen made a fine lithograph of the house. It is reproduced in Charles Pelham Greenough, III, The Graphic Work of Birger Sandzen (Manhattan, 1952), No. 69.
speak of how we have it here. We now have 3 milk cows (3 of our best milk cows died 3 years ago when we lost 6 cattle from Texas sickness) but the 3 we now have milk easily, 3 pigs for butchering, and 4 small ones, 3 dozen hens, so we got a score of eggs a day for a long time and sometimes more but now we get only 10-12 a day. We now have 47 chickens but we have had many more which have died, but I have the luck to get many roosters. I want us to get so many that we can butcher the year around since it is so cheap to feed chickens here. Last year we pressed 52 gallons (a gallon contains 3 stop in Swedish measurement) of molasses (syrup) out of sugar cane so we do not plan to press any this year. You should come here sometime and see how sugar-cane grows. I had a few of several kinds of vegetables. Next year I think we will have peaches. That is the same as "persikor" in Swedish. Our fruit trees have grown quite beautifully.

The Lord guide us by His spirit in all truth to His heavenly kingdom. Hearty greetings from Olle.

Anna

Write soon! I do not want to wait such a long time as this time. Good-by!!!