

The Värmland-Hedmark Cluster

About the VHC Newsletter

The VHC newsletter is published twice a year, in July and December. It provides updates on a genetic-genealogy project that carries the same name, “The Värmland-Hedmark Cluster” (or VHC for short). This project is run by a group of hobbyists who try to learn about the early history of their patrilineal ancestors in southern Värmland (Sweden) and in Hedmark (Norway). Among the questions that we ask are: What can be said about the ancestors’ whereabouts before they start to appear in the written records (so in the 1500s and earlier)? Where did the ancestors live before they arrived in Värmland and Hedmark? In technical terms, the project concerns the study of the following Y-chromosome haplogroup (and some of its surrounding branches):

R1b → M269 → U106 → Z18 → S11601 →
Y112538 → Y130179.

The newsletter is written by Johan N.M. Lagerlöf (email address in the page footer). This issue and all the previous ones are downloadable at www.johanlagerlof.com/gengen. Thoughts and opinions about the content of the newsletters are very welcome. A good forum for discussion is the weblog called “The VHC Blog,” available at www.johanlagerlof.com/the-vhc-blog.

The newsletter is written in \LaTeX . The layout is borrowed from www.overleaf.com, which cites howtotex.com (a now discontinued website), September 2011, as its source.

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 [En svensk sammanfattning av det viktigaste i nyhetsbrevet finns på sista sidan.](#)



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Tester	YFull ID	Oldest known patrilineal ancestor	Type of test	# of private SNPs
1a	YF71553 (=YF10028)	Per Månsson (late 1500s to 1600s). Skived, Grava parish, Värmland	Big Y-500, DL 30X WGS	n.a.
1b	n.a.	Same as Tester 1a	3 SNPs at YSEQ	n.a.
2	YF65575 (=YF11441)	Anders Andersson (1790–1873), Ne- dre Ullerud parish, Värmland	Big Y-500, Big Y- 700	2
3	YF70514 (=YF13065)	Christoffer Andersson (1600–1678), Ölmbäck, Väse parish, Värmland	Big Y-500, Big Y- 700	n.a.
4	YF13845	Same as Tester 3	Big Y-500, 2 SNPs at YSEQ	n.a.
5	YF83719 (=YF14610)	Torsten Pålsson (?–1737), Östra Glänne, Frykerud parish, Värmland	Big Y-500, Big Y- 700	2
6	YF072349 (=YF014751)	Ole Peterson (1823–?), Sør-Odal, Nor- way	Big Y-500, Big Y- 700	4
7	YF15653	Andreas Johannesen (c. 1820–?), Levanger, Norway	Big Y-500	4
8	YF70654	Henry Peadon (?–1866), Somerset, England	Big Y-700	11
9	YF85325 (=YF10028)	William Walsh (c. 1814–1896), Kilkenny Ireland	Big Y-700	7
10	YF64392	Jon Pädheresson (1676–1733), Jord- kullen, Kroppa parish, Värmland	Big Y-700	3
11	YF66826 (=YF11441)	Nils Nilsson (1742–?), Rosensjö, Karl- skoga parish, Värmland	Big Y-700	5
12	YF75623	Botolf Magnussen (1885–1967), Grue, Norway	DL 30X WGS	6
13	YF74441	Per Jonsson (1750–1809), Gersheden, Ransäter parish, Värmland	DL 30X WGS	4.86
14	YF80309	Bengt Olsson (c. 1725–1800), Södra Rådom, Nyed parish, Värmland	DL 30X WGS	4
15	YF87292	Anders Bryngelsson (1742–?), Gill- berga parish, Värmland	DL 30X WGS	3
16	YF93936	Anders Bengtsson (1740–1809), Nor- parish, Värmland	DL 30X WGS	1
17	not subm.	Jonas Andersson (1711–1773), Östra Tolerud, Grava parish, Värmland	DL 30X WGS	3
18	not subm.	Asahal Nott (b. 1804/5), Springfield, Vermont, USA	Big Y-700	not known
19	not subm.	Daniel Åssarsson Krokstad (c. 1630), Snillfjord STR, Norway	Big Y-700	not known
AC	n.a.	Same as Tester 3	n.a.	0
ML	n.a.	Same as Tester 1a	n.a.	1

Table 1: Information about the testers in the project. The last two rows of the table, showing AC and ML, are “artificial testers” that play a role in the age estimations when I compute these myself; however, AC and ML do not matter for YFull’s age estimations. AC is short for Anders Christoffersson (1657-1730), the youngest common patrilineal ancestor of Testers 3 and 4. In the age estimations (when I do them myself), we can let AC replace Testers 3 and 4, as we (thanks to the latter two testers’ test results) can infer which SNPs AC was positive and negative for. ML is short for Magnus Lagerlöf (1778-1844) and replaces in a similar way Testers 1a and 1b in the age estimations (when I do the estimations myself). The indicated number of private SNPs in the last column is the count according to YFull and it refers to the combBED region (although for Tester 17, this piece of information comes from YSEQ). The reason why Tester 13’s SNP count is not an integer is, I believe, that YFull uses a particular weight when it is unsure about whether to include a SNP or not. I use this number for the time being, and I hope to be able to investigate this issue more carefully some time in the future.

WELCOME TO issue No. 9 of the bi-annual newsletter *The Värmland-Hedmark Cluster*. This issue is mostly devoted to a discussion of changes that have occurred in the Norwegian/British/Norman branch of our tree—that is, the branch that sits as a neighbor to the actual Värmland-Hedmark cluster and is shown in the left part of the tree on page 2 (under A4). In that branch, two new testers have arrived since the previous issue came out in December last year, and each one of them has helped form a new sub-branch. These developments are reviewed in Section 2 of the newsletter.

Section 3 of the newsletter briefly discusses two unknown-father investigations. In Section 4 I offer a couple of reading tips related to so-called investigative genetic genealogy. In Section 5 I offer some further reading tips, and in Section 6 I show some pictures of Hedmark in Norway. As usual, a brief summary in Swedish of the content of the newsletter can be found on its last page. The newsletter starts out in Section 1 with an explanation of who the boy on the first page is.

1 The Cover Picture: Sven Wilhelm Didrik Maechel

THE OIL PAINTING on page 1 shows a boy called Sven Wilhelm Didrik Maechel. He was born in Karlstad, Värmland on April 1, 1900, and he died on June 2, 1906—thus only six years old. The portrait was painted posthumously in 1907 by Gudmund (Gumme) Niklas

Åkermark (1847-1927).¹ Neither the portrait nor the boy has any connection to our project (as far as we know). There is, however, a connection to Värmland, as the boy was born in Karlstad and lived there during his short life. My only other excuse for including the portrait in the newsletter is that I think the painting is beautiful.²

I have done a little bit of research on the boy Sven Wilhelm Didrik Maechel. According to the church records, he died of scarlet fever (“scarlatina”).³ Besides his parents, the boy’s family consisted of an older brother who was called Rolf Jonas Didrik and was born on April 4, 1897.⁴ This surviving son later marries and has at least four children, born in the 1930s and 1940s.⁵ Thus, it is not unlikely that the boy on the cover has several now-living close relatives.

2 The New Version of the VHC Tree

THE MOST RECENT version of the VHC haplotree is shown on page 2. As mentioned in the introduction, there are two new testers in the tree, and they have helped form two new sub-branches (represented in the tree by the unknown ancestors A10 and A11). The fact that our tree has grown means that I have been forced to change the original picture (created in \LaTeX) to a larger format (when inserted in the newsletter, the picture’s size is of course fitted to the page size). The original picture is now in A2 format instead of the previously used A3 format and, as a consequence, the text

might unfortunately be somewhat more difficult to read. That change was bound to happen, however. It is a good thing that the tree grows—that is what we want.

The new testers have been given the labels Tester 18 and Tester 19. Both individuals tested spontaneously on their own accord—as opposed to being recruited by us in the project. They also both did a Big Y-700 test at Family Tree DNA. Tester 18’s Big Y results were ready in January 2023 (or possibly somewhat earlier). The woman who manages the test account tested a male relative, who has since passed away. The tester was American, and the objective of the woman who manages the test is to identify where from the male line of her family originates. The name of the oldest known patrilineal ancestor was Asahal Nott. We also know that he was born in 1804 or 1805 in Springfield, Vermont, but that is where the paper trail stops (no father is indicated in the records). It is not known where from or when Asahal Nott’s patrilineal ancestor emigrated, nor do we know if also that ancestor’s surname was Nott.

Some time in late January or early February, Tester 18 formed a new branch with our Tester 8 in Family Tree DNA’s haplotree. Recall that Tester 8’s oldest known patrilineal ancestor was called Henry Peardon and lived in Somerset, England in the 1800s. Their youngest common patrilineal ancestor has in our tree on page 2 been given the label A10. The estimate of A10’s birth year offered by Family Tree DNA is 1250 AD (the 95% confidence interval is 768 – 1583). That link to England should be a small clue about where Nott’s

¹The artist has a Swedish Wikipedia page (entry: “Gumme Åkermark”).

²The picture is available online at <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011023760181/oljemalning>.

³See Karlstads stadsförsamling (S) FI:6 (1895-1913) Bild 263 / sid 255.

⁴See Karlstads stadsförsamling (S) AIIa:7 (1906-1910) Bild 1670 / sid 153; Karlstads stadsförsamling (S) AIIa:8 (1906-1910) Bild 4710 / sid 959; and Karlstads stadsförsamling (S) AIIa:19 (1911-1926) Bild 4870 / sid 2966.

⁵See the databases Sveriges befolkning 1940 and Sveriges befolkning 1950.

ancestors might have lived before his line emigrated to the US. Yet it would be very valuable if we could obtain more exact and more certain knowledge about Asahal Nott's origin.

Tester 19's Big Y-700 results were ready in February. His oldest known patrilineal ancestor is from Norway, and more specifically from the municipality Snillfjord (nearby Trondheim). His name is reported as Daniel Åssarson Krokstad, and the indicated year (for his birth?) is c. 1630. A few weeks after the first results were posted, Tester 19 formed a new branch together with our old project member Tester 7, who also has a Norwegian oldest known patrilineal ancestor (from the 1800s in this case). Their youngest common patrilineal ancestor has in our tree on page 2 been called A11. The estimate of A11's birth year that Family Tree DNA offers is 1620 AD (the 95% confidence interval is 1288 – 1834).

From the perspective of those of us who are members of the actual Värmland-Hedmark cluster (i.e., patrilineal descendants of A2 in the tree), the Norwegian/British/Norman branch is potentially very helpful as it can help us understand where the ancestor A3 lived. The whereabouts of A3 can in turn help us with an answer to the question how our patriline ended up in Värmland and Hedmark—for example, did it arrive there from the British Isles, from (what is today) Norway, or from somewhere else?

Arguably, however, the new additions to the tree under A4 have not taught us very much about where A4 lived (which could have been informative also about where A3 lived). The branch under A4 is still mixed Norwegian/British Isles, and it still seems hard to tell in which direction the migration went. Yet the new results have provided some support to the possibility that the Norwegian lin-

eage has been present in Norway for a fairly long time (the oldest known patrilineal ancestor of the newcomer Tester 19 was Norwegian and lived as early as c. 1630; and the estimate of the birth year of the the youngest common ancestor of Testers 9 and 19 is about 1620).

3 Unknown-Father Investigations

IN THE LAST YEAR I have continued the search for Tester 15's unknown great grandfather (discussed for the first time in No. 6, pp. 4-5, of the newsletter). To confirm our hypothesis about who that man is, I have carried out autosomal DNA testing of several individuals. In the fall of 2022 I tested two men, and currently I am partly waiting for, partly analyzing, results from two further tests.

Apart from hopefully learning about who the previously unknown great grandfather was, the investigation has revealed fascinating information about that man's life and the lives of relatives of his. The investigation has therefore grown way beyond what I first had planned, although it is still very much a worthwhile exercise. I will document all the results once I have them, probably in an essay (in Swedish). I will also report here in the newsletter in some way that feels appropriate.

In the last few months—I think since Easter or thereabout—I have spent a large share of the time I can allocate to my genetic-genealogy hobby to a further unknown-father investigation. I have written long letters and authored other documents, and I have asked altogether eight people if I may have them tested. Six of them have answered and said yes (autosomal tests in all cases, but one of the men is in addition doing a Big

Y-700 test). I cannot yet reveal details about the project, but there is at least a slight possibility that one of the participants later will show up in the Värmland-Hedmark cluster haplotype. Although there is not much that I at this stage can tell you about this investigation, I wanted to mention it, partly to explain what I have been up to recently and what things have kept me away from the VHC project.

4 Investigative Genetic Genealogy—Two New Books

IAM SURE MANY of you have read about the Golden State Killer (GSK) case, and how law enforcement after several decades eventually managed to capture this serial rapist and killer who was active in the 1970s and '80s. The fact that the perpetrator could be captured now, despite many earlier failures to identify him, was thanks to the use of genetic genealogy—most importantly, access to the large databases of GEDmatch and Family Tree DNA. A big part of the search was carried out by amateur genetic genealogist Barbara Rae-Venter, who is originally from New Zealand but has lived in the US since her 20s. She has now written a book, *Rae-Venter (2023)*, in which she tells her story and gives an account not only of the GSK case but also of several others in which she has been involved (both before and after the GSK case). The book is a nice and very informative read.

Not long after the GSK case was solved, and thanks to the same methods and databases, a Swedish double murder that had frustrated law enforcement since 2004 could be cracked. Helping out the detectives this time was the Swedish genetic genealogist Peter Sjölund. A couple of

years ago and jointly with the journalist Anna Bodin, he gave an account of his work in a thrillingly written book, Bodin and Sjölund (2021).⁶ At the time the murders were committed, I was myself not living in Sweden. I have understood, however, that the event was a very big deal in this country and it caused a lot of concern among the public, not least in the (not so very large) city of Linköping where the murders were committed. The victims were an eight-year old boy and a 56-year old woman, seemingly unrelated to the boy. The way in which the case eventually could be solved has led to a public debate in Sweden about whether and how to use the newly available investigative tools. For anyone interested in that discussion, the book is a very useful read.

5 Memoirs by Three Siblings Born in 1852, -56, and -64

MEMOIRS CAN often be an important source of information about social life back in time and about cultural history more generally. The lion's share of reasonably old such texts from Sweden are, however, written by priests, noble men or others with a similar social background. Old memoirs written by farmers or other commoners are much more unusual.

One exception is a memoir book authored by the farmer Johan Larsson (1852-1932), who lived in Sunnemo in Värmland, Sweden. His text was first published by his granddaughter Görel Qvarnström (b. Vessby) in 2014; the publisher is *Vulkan*—see [here](#).⁷ Also two of Johan Larsson's siblings—namely, Kristin

Björklund (1856-1926) och Gustaf Werner (1864-1953)—wrote similar memoirs. All three siblings had been encouraged to write such texts by Johan's son (and Görel's paternal uncle) Hadar Vessby (1892-1982).

The texts by Johan Larsson's two siblings have not been publicly available before, although they have been circulated among relatives and others who have expressed an interest. Since this spring, however, I have made all three texts available on my website as downloadable pdf files (I did so after having consulted with Görel and her cousin, Hadar's son, Bengt Vessby). To find the texts, one can use the following link and then scroll down towards the bottom of the page: [here](#). Alternatively, one can use the links below (they take you directly to the pdf file).

- Johan Larsson's text (39 pages) can be downloaded [here](#).
- Kristin Björklund's text (44 pages) can be downloaded [here](#).
- Gustaf Werner's text (74 pages) can be downloaded [here](#).

It is worth emphasizing that what makes these texts special is not only that the authors come from a farming background, but also that the texts indeed are memoirs with fairly extensive accounts of the authors' lives and their reflections on it, as opposed to diaries with mostly brief entries about the weather, family events, etc. Such farmers' diaries from the 1800s are not that unusual, as I understand it.

An inventory of Swedish farmers' diaries can be found in Larsson (1992). One example of such a publication—and a quite famous one, as I understand it—is the diary of Gustaf Persson from the early

1800s, published in 1970 by Oscar Lövgren—see Persson (1970). I enjoyed reading this, although the book would have benefited from an epilogue and further explanatory comments from the publisher (as a reader, you wonder what happened to these people after 1833 when the diary suddenly ends). An interesting piece of research, based on a farmer's diary and on old letters, is Gustavsson (2009), which I also enjoyed reading recently.⁸

6 Pictures of Hedmark

I FINISH THIS issue of the newsletter with two pictures of Hedmark. I communicated earlier in July with the person who manages the test account of Tester 4—let us call him B (Tester 4 is a relative of B). I learned that B was about to make a holiday trip to Norway, including a visit to parts of Hedmark. I then asked him to take some pictures and send to me, for inclusion in the newsletter. Unfortunately, that did not work out. One problem is that Hedmark is no longer an independent *fylke* (it has been merged with Oppland, and now the two entities jointly form Innland Fylke). Perhaps partly because of that, it was hard for B to find a road sign with the name “Hedmark”, which was one of our ideas. Anyway, I have instead managed to find a couple of nice pictures of Hedmark in an online archive, which I share on the next page.

References

Bodin, Anna, and Peter Sjölund. 2021. *Genombrottet: så löste släktforskaren dubbelmordet i Linköping*. Stockholm: Norstedts.

⁶The book is in Swedish and I am not aware of any plans to translate it.

⁷Görel is also a cousin of my father's; her mother was born Lagerlöf.

⁸Other related literature, still on my reading list, includes Myrdal (1991).

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- Rae-Venter, Barbara.** 2023. *I Know Who You Are: How an Amateur DNA Sleuth Unmasked the Golden State Killer and Changed Crime Fighting Forever*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

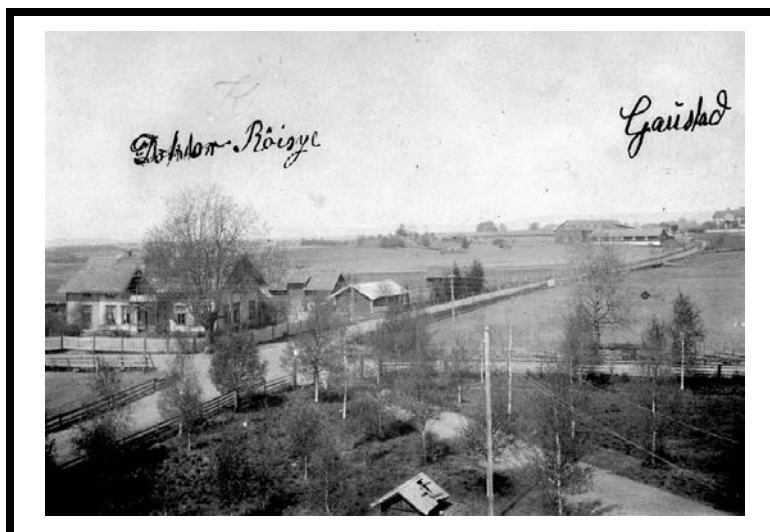


Figure 1: Photograph from 1900-1905 and from the municipality Romedal in Hedmark. Unknown photographer. Norwegian text: “Exteriør: gardsbruk, Gaustad gård og kirkeby, Romedal”. Source: digitalmuseum.org (identifier: 0417-08516); link [here](#). Public Domain Mark 1.0.



Figure 2: Photograph from 1910 and from the municipality Romedal in Hedmark. Photographer: Karl Andreas Diesen (1880-1946). Norwegian text: “Førrådsbygning Gaustad gård, gardsbruk, gruppe: 11 familien Gaustad. i midten: Frode Gaustad, Octavia Gaustad, Karen Olea ?, Irstad, ugifte søsken bak til venstre: Hans Hørsand, Ragnhild Murtad, lars Gaustad, Gunnar Murstad, Anne Diesen Nilsen, Romedal i Stange”. Source: digitalmuseum.org (identifier: 0417-03650); link [here](#). Public Domain Mark 1.0.



Svensk sammanfattning

Värmland-Hedmark-klustret (förkortat VHC) är benämningen på en – vad det verkar – väldigt stor släkt som levde i Värmland och Hedmark under medeltiden och kanske även längre tillbaka i tiden. Idag är det många människor, inte minst i Värmland, som härstammar från denna släkt på sitt raka fäderne – och ännu fler, förstås, längs andra linjer. En av Värmland-Hedmark-klustrets många grenar leder till exempel till den värmländska släkten Lagerlöf (som författaren till de här raderna råkar tillhöra).

Dessa saker har vi upptäckt med hjälp av dna-test av nu levande personer. Framförallt har vi varit behjälpta av test

av Y-kromosomen, som bara män har och som ärvs från far till son. Arbetet pågår kontinuerligt med att samla mer kunskap om Värmland-Hedmark-klustret. Det här nyhetsbrevet har utkommit i juli och december varje år sedan 2019, och det rapporterar och diskuterar vad som har hänt inom projektet sedan sist.

Exempel på frågor som vi försöker förstå: Hur stor var den här släkten? Var i Värmland och Hedmark fanns den? Hur långt tillbaka i tiden har medlemmar i släkten funnits i Värmland och/eller Hedmark? Varifrån kom släktmedlemmarna när de anlände dit? Kan resultaten hjälpa oss att förstå frågor kring social mobilitet?

- ✓ Oljemålningen på omslaget föreställer Sven Wilhelm Didrik Maechel. Denna pojke var född i Karlstad i Värmland och han blev bara sex år gammal. Han dog 1906 i scharlakansfeber. Poträttet är målat postumt år 1907 av Gudmund (Gumme) Niklas Åkermark (1847-1927). Bortsett från att pojken var värmlänning finns det ingen koppling till projektet (inte såvitt vi vet i alla fall), men det är en fin bild.
- ✓ Vi har inga nya grenar eller testpersoner i det egentliga VHC-trädet (det som utgår från A2 i trädet på sidan 2). Däremot har det sedan det senaste numret av nyhetsbrevet dykt upp två testpersoner på den norsk-brittiska grenen till vänster i trädet (den gren som utgår från A4 i trädet på sidan 2) – en testperson med amerikanska anor (det europeiska ursprunget är okänt) och en med norska anor. Var och en av dessa nykomlingar har, tillsammans med varsin befintlig testperson, bildat en ny undergren. Detta betyder att den del av trädet som utgår från A4 har nu dels en till synes norsk gren, dels en gren som till synes (eller i alla fall gissningsvis) kommer från Brittiska öarna. Denna utveckling är intressant, och vi är alltid glada när vi får fler datapunkter som vi kan försöka dra slutsatser av. Det är dock fortfarande i högsta grad oklart om anfadern A4 levde i nuvarande Norge eller på Brittiska öarna (eller till och med någon annanstans).
- ✓ En stor del av den tid jag kan ägna åt detta projekt har det senaste halvåret gått till två efterforskningar av en okänd fader. En av dessa undersökningar berör Tester 15:s okända farfars far, som jag skrivit om tidigare i nyhetsbrevet (första gången i No. 6, sidorna 4-5). Den andra undersökningen har endast potentiellt en koppling till VHC-projektet (det kommer bero på vad vi hittar), och jag kan ännu inte berätta om några detaljer. I undersökningen som berör Tester 15 har jag hittills låtit göra ca fyra eller fem test; i den andra undersökningen har jag hittills låtit testa sex personer (huvudsakligen autosomala test, men även ett Big Y-test).
- ✓ I det här numret av nyhetsbrevet tipsar jag också om ett par nya böcker om “forensisk dna-släktforskning”, alltså om försök att identifiera okända våldsvärkare och anonyma mord- och olycksfallsoffer med hjälp av dna-databaser avsedda för släktforskning. Jag tipsar dessutom om några memoartexter skrivna av två bondsöner och en bond-dotter, alla från Sunnemo socken i Värmland och födda 1852, -56 och -64.
- ✓ Jag har i ett internetbildarkiv funnit ett par fina bilder från Hedmark, som man hittar i slutet av detta nummer.