

LS 0043

Detta är en intervju med Harold Reinhart, Galveston, Texas.
Han var född 1905, i Galveston.
Hans fader var John Reinhardsson, som var född i Norge.
Modern, Augusta Olsson, var född i Hulterstad, på Öland.
Det är idag den 9 december 1974.

Lennart Setterdahl: What year was Your mother born?

Harold Reinhard: 1872.

L: -72. Ja det var i Hulterstad.

Harold: Ja. Hulterstad ja.

L: Did You speak any Swedish in Your home here in Galveston?

Harold: A little. She spoke quit a bit when we were small, but we understood here. We would answer her in English, but we could understand her.

L: How about Your father. Did he speak in Norwegian to You?

Harold: Well. You know. The man doesn't have as much to say, as a woman, in a house! So the Swedish conversation dominated. But we went to the church services when we were small, all the sermons were in Swedish. Until I was about - I guess; about 20. Then it fased out. My father, he didn't try to speak Norwegian. He spoke in Swedish.

L: He understood Swedish?

Harold: Oh! yes. Oh yes. My father had been a mergeant seaman, and he travelled all around the world and he knew the language pretty well, the Swedish language.

L: So; what year did he come to -

Harold: He came in 1890, -91.

L: Right here to Galveston?

Harold: Yeh. And my mother came here about -93, I guess, about 1893, or something like that.

L: So he stopped of here.

Harold: Yes! He was a crew member. He just didn't rejoying hes ship, when it sailed, Because; there were opportunities here for employments - along the waterfront.

L: Jaha.

Harold: A lot of Scandinavians encarrige them to stay here. Because there was that work, You know. He became a long shoreman, and, what You call; a screwman. They used to have a specialised way of loading cotton on the ships, and they used to use equipments, they were making the bales (?), and they used to use screws and jacks. So he became, what You call, a screwman.

L: Oh, I see! This was the main sailing port for the cotton?

Harold: Yes, it was. It was the main port in Texas, yes. Yes.

L: That was bigger then Huston.

Harold: Oh yes. It was a little canale there, a little byle. It was dried - I think it was about mabee 20 years after my dad came here, before they dried out the canale - up there.

L: For all the foreign ships. And; the big ships were comming to here?

Harold: Oh yes. They had pretty good size ships comming here, flags of all nations! In fact; there were mostly foreign ships, in those days. The Unated States didn't have any mergeant (?) to speak of.

- So - it was Norwegian - and Scandinavian and -

Harold: German and British and Scandinavian; and so on.

L: What was the reason for Your mother comming over here? She came direct to Galveston?

Harold: She had a sister, that was here. She had encarriged her to come.

L: What was her name?

Harold: Her name was ... Johanna, and she married a man, named Jackson, and he was also from Sweden. I asked my mother that question and it seem to be a matter of economics! They were rased on a farm and it seem that the boy, they had a brother Alfred, that stayed there. That he would be in titled to the farm. In fact; her father died - he was lifting a stone, or something, he ruptured himself in an internal bleading. So; he died rather, rather early for a Scandinavian! I think he was about 45, or something like that, when he died. So the son was gona carry on the farm, and it was more girls! She had two sisters that stayd in Sweden, and she had two sisters, that came here, to Galveston. The one, that preceded her, and she came here with a younger sister. And, they did a domestic work. I guess all they were qualified. They were handicapped, they couldn't speak the English language and they hadn't had any (?) training. The girls from Sweden were very much in demand by the people that were able to hire domestic help, business men here. In fact, my aunt, my mothers older sister, worked for one of the - and her husband - that is Mr and Mrs Jackson, worked for the wealthiest man in Galveston. I don't know if You have heard of the name Sealy(?); Well: Sealy Hospital and Sealy Bank and all that. So: he was a coachman and she was a cook, I guess. My mother worked for a prominent Judish family here, named Bloom. That's all I can remember were she worked. Then she met my dad! and they desided to try.

L: She Joined the Sion Lutheran church?

Harold: She was a church member, ja, ja.
Have You heard about the Captain Anderson? You have heard it?

L: Yes! Can You tell me a little bit more about him?

Harold: I don't know what You know!

L: Well. As a natural fact! Not to much! I know he was a Lutheran, and he was a captain.
What kind of captain?

Harold: Well. That was a sort of a honorary title given to him. He was a superintendent of the construction for the Galveston warf. He was well thought of by Mr Sealy. Mr Sealy also owned the Galveston warf, it was a private company in those days. And; The Anderson, well, he was a religious man. He did a missionary work!

L: Anderson?

Harold: Anderson. Nils J. Anderson, was hes name. I don't know - Captain was a honorary, he was never a captain of anything, what I know. But he was a superintendent of the Magnuson Construction on the warf, when they would build - they didn't have to have big construction contracts to build the schacks. There were simple wooden pears and he was a pretty good carpenter. He got to be a superintendent. He told me that he used to go down to were the screwmen meet. You know; the long shureman, and screwman. A lot of Scandinavians, and he would invite them to the church. We'd a man comming down from Austin: Stan Lean(?), You may have had heard of that man.

L: He was a pastor.

Harold: He was up at the Palm Valley. You have been in Palm Valley?

L: Yes. Yes.

Harold: He was up there. He may have served here temporarily, but he used to come down on special trips to get this church organized. And Anderson would go around and invite these people and they used to! You know, laugh at him, and so on! A lot of people acused him of favouring the Swedes; and particularly (?), But he knew from (?) that they were honnest, reliable, hard work men; so that's the kind of people he wanted. Let see what else I can tell You! He was a treashure of the church for many years - and he would provide for the ministers. He didn't have any children of hes own, so that church, I guess, was hes hobby. He was much concerned about it. It happened that my mother was here, and others: my mothers sister and they were all, they became church members!

L: Was it a tuf town, Galveston, in the 80s, and the 90s?

Harold: In what way?

L: Well. I mean, You know; A lot of the sailors came together, and some times it was a ruf mix?

Harold: I don't think it was worse than any other cities, of comfortable size, at that time. They had saloons! The people used to go to the corner store, buying a bucket of beer, You know! But; yes! I guess, there were more saloons than churches, but I don't think it was- I haven't heard my dad or mother say it was particularly bad.

L: But this captain Anderson, then. He've got a size of a group together.

Harold: Yes, and he started the church, yes.

L: And it was pastor Stan Lean then who was -

Harold: Yes. He was one of the early ones. I have to look at the records there.

L: Jaa.

Harold: And one of the early ministers that we had here probably - a familiar with the history of the Augustana synod; pastor Segerham, who was a president of the Pacific Synod. His father was an early minister here. He was here for a short while. I don't think he was married then. One of my cousins, an older one, was interested. I heard mother talk about it. She was probably a little disappointed. You know; the girls, they got a B A degree. Now, in those days, they used to look for a P S, 'prästfru', that's what they wanted!

L: Jaha. It's the life, in many ways.

Harold: So - I think - she played the organ, or the piano, or something. Anyway; mother used to talk a little bit about it, she was a little disappointed that it didn't materialise. However; she married a - she were moved to Kansas, and she married a lawyer there - and then they moved to California. She has two fine children. She is dead now.

L: What did the sailors think of Galveston?

Harold: You mean; in the 90s?

L: The early 90s.

Harold: The sailors, and then others, who had skills in carpenteries, or in the building trades; painters, carpenters, brick layers, came here, because of the opportunities. People who came here would write home and tell them of the opportunities that were here. My uncle, my mother's brother, came here. He was a carpenter.

L: He stayed here?

Harold: He decided to never come over.

L: Jaha.

Harold: I don't know what the problem was. He had two daughters that stayed there. He had two sons that came here, but they were farmers, and they settled in Kansas. And from Kansas they later moved up to Colorado, and did some irrigation farming. Then they moved to California and worked as gardeners, repairing businesses and that sort of things. That's the type of work that they did. And we had a few professional people. That was a man here that -

well. He wasn't very active in our church, but he was considering one of the prominent business here. He used his knowledge of seamen ships. He organized a (?) (?) His name was Soderman.

L: Jaha.

Harold: He was a successful businessman. He had, at least, I guess, at least a dozen (?) -boats, that were used up and down the channel, assisting the big ships into the harbour; and up to Huston and to Texas city.

L: And he was also active in the politics then.

Harold: He was active in the politics, yes. Yes, he was.

L: How about long the shuremen. Were they organized earlier, in Galveston?

Harold: Yes! I believe that there was an union, a Screwmen's association.

L: And they were strong enough to -

Harold: Yes, they were organized, I'm shure, before 1900! I feel - I'm shure that they were. And the carpenters, of course, had a union organization and the painters and the brick layers and the plumbers. I don't know -

L: Was it hard to get in to the Union, or?

Harold: I don't remember. It was later, but; when My folks came here, in fact, that was why my dad "jumped the ship"! That's what he did! He didn't rejoin the ship, he wasn't accidently left. He was incarrigeed to stay here, because of the employment opportunities and he went to work right away.

L: And he liked the area, the climate here?

Harold: Well, he liked it! He was a fellow that wasn't very fussy about where he lived! He sailed, You know. He has been all over the world! and he sailed for seven years!

L: For seven years!

Harold: Yes. He was acquainted with the hot climate. He was in Africa, and he was down in Australia and so on.

L: He did never go back to Norway?

Harold: He never did go back, no. My mother went back to Sweden, once, after her first child was born. And she stayd there a year.

L: Jaa.

Harold: Her brother, Alfred, came over, and stayd a while, but I believe that was before my mothers father died. When he died, any way, he went back to Sweden.

L: So, do You remember? No; You can't remember the hurricane, or the storm

Harold: But they told me of it.

L: And what have they told about it? What do they remember.

Harold: Well. There was a terrible deal for her. The place, where she was living, is now out in the golf. The sea wall, it is about at least 100, 150 yards out in the golf now. That's much of the shure land was washed away. The house was right closed to the beach. What I remember is; they didn't understand what was comming on! They knew the water was rising, but there was no particular alarm! And as it got worse and worse, they stayed in their house, until it was to late to do anything about it! The water was to hide away, and the houses around began to get blown into bits. So they stayd in their houses, as long as they could, and then they had to clime out from this house, they climed on from the roof-top. And in the process they lost their two children. I don't know just how! One was on mothers arm and I don't know what happened to the oldest girl, who was four. The youngest one was an infante. At one time my father was completely covered by the water! My mother just grab him, and pull him up. In the process he also had an arm broken - and of course it was this terific wind and rain and cold.

L: Was it in October?

Harold: It was in August. Howether! September! September the 7th! 8th. September the 8th, yes.

L: Was it during the daytime?

Harold: Well, I imagine it was. But it lasted, it lasted into the night. I haven't even thought about those detales. It was also the highlights in the church, of course. Her (?) was in the Swedes that were here. It united them in a foreign land, this church, were they could get together and meet eachother on a social basis and hear their own language spoken by a pastor.

L: The church was very important.

Harold: I don't know just how much ade they got. There were lots of the members of the church, they had lost everything, but they didn't give up. I don't know how they got help. There must have been some temporary ade, some sort. They came from christian homes and been in church and associating with the church activities. And then they were in a foreign land and they couldn't speak the language, and they felt with their own kind! Eventhough they came from different parts of Sweden. And then I guess, the pastor would understand their problems, and would encarrige them. So, it was a natural thing, for them.

L: Do You remember the change over from Swedish to English in the sermons?

Harold: Oh yes.

L: What did they say, the older people, about it?

Harold: They kept it up.

L: They must have emigrated to a new language.

Harold: But; after all, this change over took place, most of this people had been here for many years, like 15 or 20 years.

L: So; Your mother didn't have any problems with the English talk?

Harold: No. Because, gradually, she learned it by her association with other people: her neighbours, her friends. She spoke in a broken accent, but gradually she understood it! She had a lot of friends, that were English speaking, so she missed the Swedish! They liked the old familier bible passages, and old familier hymns, that they had. They were the same in English, like the song "Tryggare kan ingen vara". Well - You can say it in English, but it's not the same. The translation is a little different. The change over was this that it was graduals. First of all they went into the English services in the evening. Högmässa, The morning service was in Swedish. Then gradually it was every other. The congregation would vote on it. The English speaking people, who were having difficulties with the Swedish, they started fighting for the English. You have to learn Swedish to graduated from our seminaries - Swedish and Greek, i Guess!! So gradually it got to be every Sunday. And finaly the Swedes were so out numbered - as a consession to them, they promitted: one Swedish service a month. And then it ended when we couldn't get any pastor. The last one, I remember, was Henning Larson. Wasn't it the last one who could speak swedish? It fased out in 1930. And he was a native born American and hes Swedish was book Swedish! It wasn't natural. But we had a pastor Heurlin, I guess he was born in Sweden, but came here in the earlier age. But he had the abillity to talk conversational Swedish! so that even I could understand the sermons! But we have some ofthose Swedes that come down from central Texas! They would try to talk Swedish, it would be a lot of frasiology, and I couldn't quite understand it. But Heurlin had the abillity to just make it conversational. He would use the simplest Swedish! Mabee because; that's all he knew! But he was a self-trained person. But most of hes Swedish came from studying it and practising it, even though he came here in an early age, I think he was born in Sweden. But that's about the way the Swedish would fase out. I'm shure that's the way it happened in the most communities.

L: How about other activities, outside the church, for instance. Were there any groups - like, You know,

Harold: That's a part of the church.

L: But I mean; outside the church.

Harold: It was a Swedish group that had like dances or parties, it seems to me there was. All the Swedish didn't go to church! You know!

L: No.

Harold: But there were a few that felt that they wanted to have it.

L: But when they married? Didn't the minister take care of that? Or did they go the -

Harold: Oh, they got married in the church! There was a Swedish group, as I recall it, in about 19 - Before 1920 - I thought it fased out after that. They would have social affaires, mabee 3

or 4 times a year. My family didn't associate with them. She were never invited! She couldn't dance, or anything like that.

L: How about sickness, and ade in the society?

Harold: There was none, that I know.

L: They went to the church if something was needed?

Harold: Well! Mabee the social group did something. But; the Swedes had a way of not needing much ade!

L: They were healthy!

Harold: They were healthy, and They believed in helping themselves. Their families helped them.

L: Did they associate with the American groups so much?

Harold: Yes, they did! Some of them did, they had to! I mean; as far as groups are concerned, what do You mean - like

L: Like playing bridge!

Harold: Well some of them joined the Eagles, which was a social club. Well. There was my drinking uncle! I could tell You about him! They used to meet at The Fredriksons saloon! downtown - and Vick Fredrikson was a kind of a little politician. I don't know - but there were quite a few of Scandinavians who were there. That was a sort of social - for the men! I don't know what the women did! That was in the days - that was a mans sanctuary. The women couldn't break that.

L: They discushed the politics.

Harold: They discushed politics, and the work, and, so on. I don't know what was going on there.

L: Well: You Mrs (?): You are a sister of Harold Reinhard.

Harolds syster: Yes.

L: Do You remember something from the old days, from Your parents? How about the ladies? Your brother said; hes uncle went to one place. But: how about the ladies? What did they do, then?

Harolds syster: Well. I think; in the church work. They used to work and they had chilisuppers and bazars round the christmas time and the ladies were make things, and sell them. They may sell food and they had many faithful workers. They are all gone now, like my brother mentioned: Mrs Engström, and her sister Mrs Westman, was another faithful worker down in the church. My mother and several of this - they desided - all the Swedish people

used to go all together once a week, and met in a home and just to have coffee and cakes, celebrate up the birthdays, just social together. Just to keep in contact with one another!

L: Ja.

Harold's sister: I can remember the church on (?). (?) a new church. And I was confirmed in 1927 there, by pastor Heurlin.

L: In Swedish?

Harold's sister: No, just in English. But I can remember! the Swedish been held on Sundays. I used to stay with my mother, of course it was just that's all I had! And I just stayed there! I could learn to sing the hymns and go to the Swedish (?), I understood it! But some times, it's like my brother said, it was harder with a different speaking.

L: So; How about the ladies, now. Could they get the husbands with them for the church on Sundays, or did they have problems maybe sometimes? Do You think it was the ladies work to build the church up?

Harold's sister: Well. I think some time, yes.
(Skr hoppar här över några meningar pga osäkerhet att förstå det hela).

Harold: There was, what You were talking about, this families, this friends that got together. There was the way that they had communication with each other. And there were several groups of ladies that were meet in their homes for socials, birthdays, and things like that. They were visited that way. But; they wasn't only a church related. They were cross the religious signs. My mother had a lot of friends, that were in the Scandinavian Methodists and somebody even joined the other church groups.

L: There were two churches: The Lutherans and The Methodists.

Harold's sister: Scandinavian Methodists.

L: There was a religious difference then between the Scandinavians. But they still cooperated in community efforts? The methodists want to be Lutherans, or?

Harold: Well. I think it was based on the type of service, the ritual. I think the methodists joined that group, like the informality of the methodists. They didn't like to be confined to the ritual that we followed. We had one man who was very active in that church! He was superintendent Maderes. He might question: "Why did You leave the Lutheran church, Alfred"?

He told my dad because there were no Christians in the Lutheran church! I guess it was similar to the Covenant church in Sweden, this Methodists. There are the type of singing, the informality and that sort of things met their needs, that the Lutheran church didn't satisfy. But there were not any friction between us, because we were all pretty good friends! We; as I said, we did meet outside of the church in social affairs. We had an annual picnic together and the women, of course, would meet in the different homes! I gonna tell You about a character, that was interesting here. That was a Swede, that had a vegetable cart. He called on the Swedish homes! He used to go to the Produce row and get tomatoes and apples and celery and carrots, and things like that - and he had this truck that he pushed. He would call on different

people! He would - it's all like my mother - he didn't have to by any meals - because: there was always cofee and cookies and if You were hungry there was eggs and potatoes and things like that! And he was a little gossip: too! He would cheer the news about what's happen down in Mrs Jacobsons house! And Mrs Olsons house! And Mrs Swensons house! And then; when he left our place, he'd tell about what happened at the Reinhards! But he didn't all work as a long shureman! We had one who was a vegetable mergeant, that pushed hes wagon all over Galveston! and he lived to be, about 75! Yes, it was Lindkvist. So: You have some different caracters here!

Harolds syster: Lindkvist?

Harold: Yes, it was Lindkvist. So You had some different caracters here. That's many different things You've heard - but I'd never seen another fellow like that, or heard anything like that! But: we had our Lindkvist!

L: Yes. Galveston has been a very important seaport. I'm shure You've lot of - mabee not stranded seamen, but some times; seamen -

Harolds syster: No.

L: But sometimes seamen came in trouble! Did the church help out them, in any way?

Harolds syster: Well. They had just, what they call: The Norwegian Seamens Lutheran Church, crossed from The Sion Lutheran/ Swedish Lutheran and; at the christmas time, well, they were separate church, You know. They had their church and we had our (?). At christmas time they found out then a seamen ship was comming in, I mean: a foreign ship, like Norwegian, - or Swedish, and they were planning a big christmas party for the seamen. They invited them, those, who could come up to the shure, to this Norwegian Lutheran Church. And they were given a Christmas party. The ladies were going together, and they had cookies, and coffe and sandwiches and: they had a big christmas tree, and they had a man by the name of Mr Ash - Ask we pronounse it in norwegian. And he spoke to the fellows, if they were lutherans. If they were Swedish, they got somebody to speak in the Swedish language to the boys that couldn't speak English. And in between; these ladies went to the church, to bring gifts, like stockings and different things, the boys could use when they went back on the ship. And then they were dancing around the christmas tree, like they use to do, and they had music and they had a real joyful time! And everybody talked to the different boys and may them feel like at home. And they said: "That was the most wonderful thing they ever had"! Be away from home for the Christmas, and have a place, like that, to go! And they really enjoied it. And the same way round new years! If there were a ship in, they had a New year party, and coffe and cake for them to come over there, and enjoied it. The seamen mabee gott in a rong direction, You know, and got in places wether they mabee shouldn't be, or something. And that really helped that a lot!

L: And then we had that seamen-center Bethel.

Harold: Seamens Bethel, yes.

L: Was that a hoste, not to far from the churches, or?

Harold: There was centraly located. You might say; downtown. It was one block from The Lutheran church, and two blocks from the Swedish Methodist Church. They were financialy backed by (?) people, (?) agents. (?) companys, and others interrested in the maritime work in

the harbour here. The shipping interrests, along shure interrests. All who have to do with the port activities. The Galveston warfs. I believe that all churches in the communitie contributed something to it. And later on it became an agency of the communitie chest, or united fond.

L: And The reason for it was to give the seamen a nice day in Galveston.

Harold: Yes. Those, who were waiting for a ship, - it gaves them a good home, a good room to stay, in a good envirenment. Because the only things that's open for seamen when they are at the port is: worse! Beer-joints and prostitution, and things like that! And: this was to curage people to have a good place to stay. They had referation for games (?). Then the Chaplin - he was also te Chaplin- this reverend (?) was hes name.

L: He was a methodist?

Harold: He was a methodist, yes. And; he was in charge of that for many many years.

L: Was he also the methodist minister?

Harold: He was not the regular methodist minister, when he was Chaplin, but he did service the substitute during a vacansy, or during a vacation of the minister.

L: But hes main job was to be the administrator of the seamens -

Harold: Yes. That was hes main job.

L: And it was not to far from the churches.

Harold: That's right! And; Not to far from the port facilities; near the docks! And of course; Galveston has most of the churches, they were centraly located, within 3/4 of the churches were within half a mile from eachother, the different: the Methodists, and the Prespetharians and the Baptists, and the Episcopalians. So it was convinient, from that point of view, it was convinient from being just about two blocks in the center of town, it was convinient to the ships, and to the docks. So it was centraly located.

Lennart Zetterdahl:

Slut på intervjun med Harold Reinhard i Galveston i Texas.

Det är idag den 9 december 1974.

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