



How Do I Fit In?: A Swedish Family History

Linoma Wingate

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They were ordinary people caught in an extraordinary time The ship's engines made a deep rumbling sound like thunder and there was a steady tremor under their feet. Then the ship's whistle blew loud and long. The engines began a steady drumbeat, which was even louder than the rumbling sound. Charlie and Ida looked at each other. Ida could see fear in Charlie's eyes. The next moment, Charlie hugged her, and she returned his embrace. "I guess we're off to America" Charlie shouted. "There's no turning back now" So begins the story of six siblings, who in the 1800s, filled with courage and hope, left their home in Sweden to discover a new life in America. Driven to escape hunger and poverty, they were lured by an enticing vision. There was promise of land and riches in the new world when homesteading opportunities were at their peak in stark contrast to the shortage of farm land in Sweden. But in following this vision, they must leave behind all they knew and all those they loved to face an uncertain destiny. But the six didn't arrive in America together. Each made their own journey and each has a unique story to tell. They experienced dangers, hard times, and loneliness, as they labored to tame the vast Nebraska prairie into prosperous farms. Some were more successful than the others. Some would leave Nebraska behind to find their destiny farther out west. In spite of hardships and poverty, enduring tragedies, even violence and suicide, they forged on to create a life in America. These six siblings are true American pioneers and are part of the bigger picture of all immigrants that came to America. The stories of Nils August the Trailblazer, Ida the Survivor, old Charlie One-Eye, and Hilda the Ice Lady are but a few of the fascinating characters that live in this colorful family saga. The story of the siblings is one that is rich in American history and speaks to their descendants and to all people of the 21st centu

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