

These are brief, condensed notes. More information on each subject is available.

THE BIRTH AND YOUTH OF THE STEELCOAT

Both Johan (John) and Anders (Andrew) are very popular names in Sweden. It is not surprising that numerous "Anders", the apparent father of Johan Andersson, have turned up in and around Strängnäs, Sweden during a period of five years before and after Johan Andersson's estimated year of birth. None of them have yet to be shown by any surviving record to be associated with our Johan Andersson.

All attempts to research Johan Andersson's childhood have so far failed. There has been nothing at all, not a single word, found in Sweden despite numerous searches over many years. The explanation for this secrecy may be the location and nature of Swedish society when and where he was born and raised. What follows provides one explanation for the total lack of records. They may be another.

Strängnäs, at the time, was the Royal Capital of Sweden. The Royal palace was nearby. The Church on the top of the hill is where Royalty, the Nobility and high government officials attended church and numerous high-ranking people are buried. The church dates back about a thousand years. Old Viking rune stones are incorporated into its foundation. The problem for us is that being a Royal Church means that the church records have been sealed regardless of how our ancestor fits into the local society. No baptismal, marriage or burial records for anyone are available for examination.

Education for most children lasted for approximately seven years, about age five to twelve. Only the clergy, nobility and Royalty normally received higher education. Incredible as it sounds to us today at age twelve children were expected to leave home and provide their own livelihood. This was, at least in part, driven because the average life expectancy was considerable shorter than today, only about 40 years. It was rare that someone lived past the age of 50 years.

Girls often found employment as maids and servants. Boys usually tried to find work as an apprentice so that they could learn a trade and maybe have their own business. If not they usually found manual labor jobs. Strängnäs was different. It was the seat of the Government so there were jobs available there that were not found in the rest of the country. Jobs for what we today would call pages and interns were available in government offices. The competition between girls for government jobs was said to be fierce because Strängnäs attracted a lot of wealthy and important men. This created a phenomenon more or less unique to the area. It has been reported that such wealthy and important men often had several illegitimate children by young girls working in Strängnäs. This may be another reason why the church records are sealed.

The consequences of becoming pregnant by a rich and powerful man were quite lucrative. A young man would be found who was willing to marry the pregnant girl, and to raise the child as if he were the biological father. No doubt most young girls already had a young man available to do this. The payoff was that enough money would be paid to the young couple so that they could purchase a farm and this would provide the couple a secure future for life. Additionally the child of a very rich and powerful man sometimes would have more benefits along the way. Often education was of a higher quality or maybe even extended a little. Political influence was sometimes used to provide a good job when the time came.

On the other hand the richer and more politically powerful the true biological father was the more secrecy the events surrounding the illegitimate child become.

Records of **Johan Andersson's** parents, his birth and childhood do not seem to exist.



STRÄNGNÄ CHURCH ON THE HILL
It was there when Johan Andersson was born and where he may have been baptised.



A PORTION OF GRIPSHOLM CASTLE
It is now a Museum and houses the Swedish National Portrait Gallery

In 1640 when Måns Kling set off on a recruiting trip to find colonist for the next expedition to New Sweden there were some unusual events that occurred. His first stop was very nearby on the steps of the Strängnäs City Hall. There he signed up only one colonist, the boy or lad, **Johan Andersson from Strängnä**, before he moved on to other areas of the country. Johan Andersson was sent to Stockholm to go board the ship CHARITAS. He sailed from Stockholm to Gothenburg where the CHARITAS joined up with the KELMAR NYCKEL. Johan Andersson and the other colonist were all advanced, in cash, about one-third of their first year's salary. This appears to be the only expedition where the colonists were advanced any part of their salary. Why it was done this time is a mystery. The colony, beginning to end, was a "Company Store" operation without cash involved. Every transaction, every debit and credit, was recorded in the Company books. All colonists had to return across the ocean to Sweden to collect, or to pay, the difference between the debits and credits in his account record.

There must be a logical explanation for all of these unusual events but It is clear that only a very rich and very powerful person could secretly arrange for all these unusual things to happen involving young **Johan Andersson from Strängnä**.