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Abstract for the conference *Nordic Immigration in the Pacific Northwest, Then and Now*

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“A Trip to Sweden for 50 cents”: Screenings of Swedish Films in the Swedish-American Community in Seattle until 1950

The Swedish immigrants in the United States created a cultural community and identity by publishing newspapers and Swedish-American literature, setting up theatrical performances etc. Besides that, the Swedish-American diaspora organized film screenings with various types of films: documentaries, travel films, short films, feature films. From about 1920 until about 1950, screenings of Swedish films constituted an essential part of the Swedish-American cultural life, and that also became a widespread entertainment for the immigrants to Seattle. In this presentation, I discuss which films were shown to the Swedish immigrants, how and where these films were screened, and how the Swedish-American newspaper in Seattle *Svenska Pacific Tribunen* (*Swedish Pacific Tribune*) wrote about the films. The presentation starts with a discussion about which cinema theatres in Seattle that was used for these screenings, where they were geographically situated, and how the screenings were marketed. With the articles in the newspaper *Svenska Pacific Tribunen* as a departing point, I discuss what kind of memories and conceptions of the old country that was reproduced and how these conceptions was part of a new transnational Swedish-American identity. To some extent, it was the same movies that were popular in the U.S. and in Sweden, but as a cultural artifact they took on different meanings; meaning is changed by the social and cultural context, and also by how the films are “used”. The Swedish-Americans’ reception of Swedish films were in part different from the Swedish reception because the films were, besides being entertainment and a cultural experience, perhaps above all a channel to see Sweden, to experience the familiar and the known, and to maintain contact with the old homeland.