

Margo Sonia Lira Ylonen, from Mexico

This background information was gathered by Raija Ylönen of Ylönen Family Association:

Margo's grandfather **August Ylönen** is in the Ylönen Family Book, family number **796**. **August** was born 1872 as the youngest child in the family of crofter **Tahvo (Staffan) Ylönen** and mother **Anna Lisa Davitsainen** living in a cottage in Finland, Pieksämäki village of Kirkonkylä.

August moved in 1897 to neighbouring Suonenjoki area to work as a farm hand. Next year he got married to **Silja Katri Jääskeläinen** from Karttula. In 1903 they followed August's brother Herman to south east Finland town of Viipuri. By then, the family also had son **Emil** who was born in 1901. The family's first child Martta died just few months before Emil was born. The family lived in villages of Lyykylä and Tali and more children were born in Viipuri area: daughters **Elsa Katariina**, born 1904, **Rauha Siviä**, born in 1911, and **Silja Sanelma**, born in 1916.

In 1917 August and son Emil left to America. Perhaps the restless times made August to search for more peaceful country to live. New York's Ellis Island record show that they sailed from Kristiania (former name of Oslo), Norway on the ship "Bergensfjord" and arrived in New York in August 1917. In their arrival record they listed that they had a brother-in-law Johan Jääskeläinen in Calumet, Michigan. How did August and Emil get from Viipuri to Norway is not known. In 1920 wife Silja followed to join the family together in America. They sailed from Helsinki to Liverpool, England and then on the ship "Kaiserin Auguste Victoria" arriving New York in June 1920. The Ellis Island records show that Silja Ylönen, aged 46 travelled with children Elsa age 15, Rauha age 9, Silja age of 4. (Migrationinstitute of Finland record enclosed)

Some facts about Viipuri (or Vyborg in English): Over the course of the 19th century, the town developed as the centre of administration and trade for eastern Finland. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the fall of the Russian Empire, Finland declared its independence from Russia in December 1917. The start of the new country was nothing but peaceful. Civil war started in Viipuri and later spread to the rest of Finland. During the Civil War, Vyborg was in the hands of the Finnish Red Guard (industrial and agrarian workers) until it was captured by the White Guard (land owners and those in the middle and upper classes) in the Battle of Vyborg in 1918. After the second world war (1939-1945), part of Karelia area including Viipuri had to be surrendered to the Soviet Union.

Silvia Lopez sent the following story of her family:

My name is Silvia López Lira. I live in Torreón, Coahuila, México. My mom, Margo Sonia Lira Ylonen, passed away exactly one year ago. I was looking up for some papers and I found out these newsletters of the Ylösten Sukuseura (The Ylönen Family Society) and some other endearing memories.

My husband, children and I used to live in Santa Catarina, Nuevo León, México. After my dad passed away (December 2012), we moved to Torreón, to take care of my mom, since she was blind. Nine and a half years later my mom passed away. My mom worked as a Family Doctor for ten years. Suddenly, a blind spot appeared in the middle of her sight, when she was about 36 years old. That blind spot, gradually, continued growing until her peripheral vision was very narrow.

My mom, Margo Sonia, was Silvia (Rauha) Ylönen Jääskeläinen's daughter, married to Tony Lira in Chicago, Illinois. They had another son: Omar Lira Ylonen, who passed away several years ago.

As my mom used to tell us, our Ylönen's Family story goes like this: My great grandparent August Ylönen, emigrated from Viipuri to America (I am not sure if he traveled with his son, Emil, or if Emil was born, later, in America), but Katrina Jääskeläinen stayed with her daughters Rauha (Silvia), Elsa, and Sanelma in the railway station, where she worked as the “signal-woman.”

My mom told me Finland was in war (1918) and that a bomb exploded just on the railway station, where they used to live in. Great grandmother Katrina had to escape with her baby, Sanelma, and her other two daughters, Rauha (my grandmother) and Elsa. They ran through the forest, eating the new growths of pine trees.

While they were wandering through the forest, Rauha got ill, and they found a hospital where they made her a tracheostomy. Somehow, they arrived to Hanover and they embarked to New York, where great grandfather August and friends were waiting for them. Then, they traveled to Michigan, where great grandfather August was already established. This is the true value of a family who really wishes to meet again, no matter the distances.

Grandmother Rauha changed her name to Silvia, easier to pronounce in English, and sounded like her second name: Silja. She studied Business in Suomi College. Later, she worked in Chicago, at RCA, where she met my grandfather Tony. She was very fond of composing and playing piano, like her *Blossom Time in Hiawata Land* .

Rauha-mummo muutti nimensä Silviaksi, joka oli helpompi lausua englanniksi ja kuulosti hänen toiselta nimeltään Silja. Hän opiskeli kauppatieteitä Suomi Collegessa. Myöhemmin hän työskenteli Chicagossa RCA:ssa, jossa hän tapasi isoisäni Tonyn. Hän tykkäsi kovasti säveltämisestä ja pianonsoitosta, kuten *Blossom Time in Hiawata Land* .

We have met some Ylönen family. When I was a little kid we went to Ahmeek, Michigan, to meet Aunt Lilly Haataja and family. Also, we met some other family in Chicago. I used to write to Aunt Lilly Haataja, who lived in Michigan. I found one of her letters and some pictures (attached).

Years later, when I was a teenager, we met Aunt Sunny (Sanelma, my grandmother Rauha's sister) and her family at Denver, Colorado.

My aunt grandmother Lilly and I used to be pen pals. She once sent me an audio tape where she was teaching me how to count in Finnish, and a coloring book of Ahmeek (I keep them in Santa Catarina's house, in the city we used to live before my dad passed away). Aunt Lilly passed away long ago and I have not been in touch with her family (I have lived in this rush for the past years...).

Raija, I was very glad to know that somewhere, in the other extreme of the world, we have family. For now, we live in Torreón, Coahuila, México, at my mom's house. As soon as we finish with all the paperwork after her death, we will have to make a decision where are we going to live then. I will keep in touch with you to let you know.

Thanks a lot for your time to read this letter. I read Viipuri means Saints Fortress. Today, one year ago, we witnessed the birth of a new saint in heaven: my Mom.

I am attaching you some other pictures of Margo Sonia Lira Ylonen.

Silvia Lopez

Silja Ylönen b. 1874

and the children travel information from the records of
Siirtilaisuusinstituutti, Helsinki (Migrationinstitute of Finland)

- Last name: Ylönen
- First name: Silja
- Age: 46
- Depart port: Helsinki
- Destination: New York
- Destination country: USA
- Ship from Finland: Arcturus
- Departure date: 15.05.1920
- Departure from England: 05.06.1920
- Notes: (other travellers) Elsa, Rauha and Silja Ylönen.

There are no records of August or Emil Ylönen's departure in Migrationinstitute records.



Margo Sonia Lira Ylonen
(1938-2022)