

1990

Jag har en vän (I Have a Friend)

Chester Ringdahl

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Song: "Jag har en vän" ("I Have a Friend")

Singer: Chester Ringdahl

Town: New Sweden, ME

NA 2258 CD 979 Track 8

Collector: Jeff McKeen

Date: 1990

Special thanks to Dan Olson of New Sweden, ME for his assistance identifying this song.

"Jag har en vän" is an old Swedish pietistic hymn, with words and music written by Nils Frykman in 1895. Swedish hymn writer Nils Frykman was part of the Swedish Free Church movement in old Sweden during the second half of the 19th century. It has a very well done English translation that has been published in many hymnals by a number of church denominations, which has helped maintain its popularity even after the Swedish language largely died out here in the US. The English version remains an old favorite in the Swedish towns of Aroostook County to this day. See below for full Swedish lyrics and an English translation.

The Swedish community in northern Maine began with 51 men, women, and children who established the town of New Sweden in 1870 under the sponsorship of W.W. Thomas. Creating farmland out of the wilderness, Aroostook County's Swedish colonists prospered and multiplied. Today, evidence of the area's Swedish heritage is clearly visible. Although Swedish is not widely spoken anymore, an active historical society and a community of Swedish and non-Swedish residents carry on traditional songs, dances, stories, holiday celebrations, and religious observances.

Swedish:

1.

Jag har en vän, som älskar mig
så högt, att han lät offra sig
i korsets död på Golgata.
Mitt hjärta, sjung halleluja!

Refrain

Halleluja! Jag har en vän
som för mig hem till himmelen.
Han hela vägen med mig går,
och av hans hand jag kronan får.

2.

Min Jesu kärlek innerlig
är ljuset på min vandringsstig.
Den skatten gör mig rik och säll
och driver sorgen från mitt tjäll.

Refrain

3.

Jag har en vän, en mäktig vän,
som tronar uti himmelen
och råder över alla land,
på höjd, i dal, på sjö och strand.

Refrain

4.

O broder, stäm i sången in,
ty denne vän är också din!
Om du ej är så from du vill,
hans nåd för dig dock räcker till.

Refrain

English:

1.

I have a Friend Who loveth me,
He gave His life on Calvary;
Upon the cross my sins He bore,
And I am saved forevermore.

Refrain

Oh, hallelujah, He's my Friend,
He guides me to the journey's end,
He walks beside me all the way,
And gives to me a crown some day.

2.

My Savior's love so full and free
Doth light the weary way for me;
It fills with joy each passing day
And drives my sorrows all away.

Refrain

3.

I have a Friend, a mighty Friend,
Upon His power I may depend;
He reigneth over every land,
O'er valley, hill, on sea and strand.

Refrain

4.

O brother, join us in our song!
This Friend to you would fain belong;
Tho' far from what you'd like to be,
His grace sufficient is for thee.

Refrain

Maine Folklife Center