



The Edling house. Above, Hans Neijbert and girlfriend.

The Edling Attic Group

An old wooden house is Uppsala's most sought-after student living-quarters.

Photos by Rolf Noden

THE kitchen is a gas-ring on a tiny brown table. The dining-room is a ten by fifteen foot hall with three chairs, eight cupboards and a sky light. There is no refrigerator.

Each of the seven bedrooms has a floor-to-ceiling Dutch-tile stove. The rent is twelve dollars a month including atmosphere. Don't make any unnecessary noise, somebody may have

an exam tomorrow. No, there will be no vacancies until, possibly, 1966. And then of course you have to get an OK from all the boys before you can move in.

This is the EDLING ATTIC, named after the owner of the house and Upsala's most sought after student living quarters. Not because the rent is low or because the house is situated within a comfortable seventeen seconds running-distance from the main university building or five minutes walking distance from the Caroline library. But because there is no other house quite like the Edling house and because the Edling attic group is considered a unique bunch of fine boys.

This three-story wooden building at the upper end of Iron Bridge Street in the heart of Upsala was built in the 1830's. In 1913 District Judge Nils Edling bought the house from an-

other district judge whose name was Odencrantz. If Edling, who is over eighty, ever wants to sell, the City will be glad to buy the house and make sure it stays untouched by real estate agents. Not because the Edling house is particularly beautiful or unique in style. There are probably a hundred houses in Upsala similar to the Edling house on the outside. But there is not one like it on the inside.

Squeaking staircases

To reach the attic one climbs two squeaking, winding staircases. Mr. Edling and his wife and a couple of Ph.D.'s live on the first floor. Supposedly three girl students live on the

second floor, but they are never seen in the attic. The upper staircase ends at a landing. Heavy joisting, which supports the roof, gives the room an irregular shape. It is light blue in color, cold and slightly frightening. Three milk bottles, an overloaded ash-tray and a monstrous, cast-iron coattree make up the furniture.

A sign saying "Please knock twice or another door may open" on one of the bedroom doors indicates that insulation is next to non-existent.

Three male students reside in this inner part of the attic. One is currently working on his doctor's degree in political science. He is tall, slim, spectacled and speaks very softly. Number two is an art student, Hamlet hair-cut, black, Edwardian suit and collar pin. He speaks extremely softly. Number three is a law student, broad muscular shoulders, crew-cut, bathrobe. Number four is close to a doctor's degree in economic history. He has acquired much of the seeming shyness of his teacher, Professor Karl-Gustaf Hildebrand. But he may also have some of Hildebrand's courage which led him to stand up as a young poet in the thirties and tell his fellow-students that the image of Upsala as "the city of eternal youth" was nothing but an illusion.

Eggheads are OK

A cranky, wooden bridge over the gap of another staircase leads to the Outer Attic, the part of this under-the-roof third floor that faces the graveyard. To get a room here you really have to be "in" with the boys. Without their unanimous consent nobody moves in. It is all right to be an egg-head (most of the attic boys are), an anarchist or even an atheist but you can never, never get in if you are a Philistine. And if you happen to have money in the bank, don't tell the boys. Money here is considered an utter triviality. Also don't bring up such subjects as culture or the freedom of the individual unless you can clearly define exactly what you mean by culture and freedom. But please feel free to make yourself a cup of coffee (there is coffee on the shelf above the shoeshine kit).

(Continued on page 28)



Law student Peder Hörd af Segerstad prepares the delicatessen of the day in *the* kitchen.



Young philosopher Hans Neijbert in his attic room.

The Edling Attic Group (Continued)

This is the heart of the attic. This is where Bo Bergman, brilliant poet and member of the Swedish Academy, lived as a student. He later wrote a poem about the Edling house — "What is left? The old Iron Bridge Street house is still there. In the open window a curtain is raised like the trembling breast of a young man's sighs . . .".

Another Academy member, Albert Engström, author, artist and satirist also once occupied one of these rooms. Engström wrote poems in Latin during his time in Upsala (although he never quite mastered Latin grammar, but was once told by a young genius that he had quoted in one verse the only existing error in the classic Cavallin Latin-Swedish dictionary).

Martin Lamm another late member of the Swedish Academy has lived in the attic. He later became professor of literature.

The Edling attic has also housed chemistry student Arne Tiselius, now head of the department of biochemistry a few blocks away and a Nobel Prize winner.

The attic was once occupied by girl students and one of them was Karin Boye, the poetess.

Exit the butler

The boys who live here today may or may not be great names of tomorrow. One is an art student, a bishop's son and the director of Alba Longa, a small gallery down the street that just gave an exhibit of the works of Stig Borglind, nestor of Swedish graphic art. Number two is studying philosophy when he is not interrupted by the frequent visits of his beautiful girl-friend. Number three a B.A., in political science is sceptic when it comes to suggestions how to solve the current problems of humanity.

In the old days each student usually rented two rooms, one for himself and one for his butler. Today, only one student in Upsala (a 35 year-old B.A., who specializes in African politics) is known to have a butler and the boys in the attic make their own beds and wash their own nylon shirts in the shower-room next to the "kitchen."

The boys in the attic must be a nice group because as a special feature of the Edling house Mrs. Edling, 70, regularly gives each of them two fresh pears on her birthday.