

Lovisa and Carl emigrated from Sweden in 1884 to Arlington, MN. (separately)

Lovisa's relation to Manilla Meyer Bjella

Manilla's mother was Pauline Kjelleberg Meyer.

Manilla's father was Ernest John Meyer, born Feb 7, 1896.

Ernest's parents were Charles Meyer and Amanda Eckblad.

Amanda's parents were Carl (Karl) Isak (Isaac) Johansson Eckblad and **Lovisa Svensdotter Gustafsson Eckblad**.

Lovisa

By Carl Leslie Bergren

This is the story of Lovisa, my maternal grandmother, as I have gleaned it from the excellent notes written by my Aunt Mary (Blenda Marie) Johnson, and Aunt Mae Satterstrom, in addition to my personal recollections including many visits with Grandmother when she lived in our home at Clarkfield, MN. I am indebted to cousins Doris Stoll, Alice Holberg and Marie Payne for their assistance. I have tried to give as accurate a picture of an interesting life as possible. Where I have quoted Lovisa, I have used familiar phrases she would be apt to have used.

LOVISA'S EARLY YEARS

Lovisa Svensdotter was born at Skatta-garden, Berga Forsamling (parish), Kronobergs Län (province), Småland, Sweden on the 19th of May 1849 to Sven Gustavson and Gustava Johannesdotter. Her father had some sort of official status and served the community as a veterinarian and helped his neighbors with their health and personal problems. He was rather prosperous and owned land on which eight **torpare** or **bonder** (peasants or crofters) resided. Lovisa told her children that her mother was a lady who always dressed well and did no housework.

Lovisa was the youngest of eight children: Britt Marie, Andreas, Inga Lena, Christine, Gustave, two Elin who died in infancy, and a third Elin who survived, Sven Magnus and our little Lovisa. She was a bright little girl and quickly learned to read and cipher in school. Her teacher urged the Swensons to allow him to teach her to write, but since this was contrary to custom this opportunity was denied to her life-long regret. Lovisa often accompanied her father on his healing errands and learned many skills that proved useful in adult life.

When she was old enough to leave home, Lovisa was placed as a **tjänarinna** (maid) to wait on the lady, make beds and serve at table in the home of **herrskapsfold** (gentry) living in Skåne.



After proving herself she was promoted to **kock** (cook) at a salary of 40 **krona** (about \$8.00 to \$10.00) a year plus a few pounds of wool. Although her duties kept her busy for long days, Lovisa tells of happy nights of dancing till dawn. She was always a happy person who loved people and was surrounded by a host of admirers and friends.

LOVISA AND KARL

Lovisa was 14 years old when she met and fell in love with Karl Isaac Jonasson, the son of Jonas Jonasson and Katrina Jonasdatter of Ljungby, Småland, Kronobergs Län. Karl was a skilled cabinet and coffin maker. He had been born October 6, 1841 at Växjö Socken (parish) and lived at Eckaträde, therefore was known as Karl Isaac Jonasson på Eckaträda. Lovisa's parents had chosen a professor to be her mate, but Lovisa was strong willed and deeply in love so after six years of courting she and Karl were **married on the 3rd of February, 1869** at Berga, her home parish. Her parents showed their disapproval by disinheriting Lovisa. The young couple established their home at Eckaträda near Ljungby and became part of the Bäck Forsamling (parish) where the children born in Sweden were baptized.



The year Karl and Lovisa were married was one of exceptionally high emigration to the United States, largely caused by the push factor of famine following the disastrous crop failures of 1867-1868. Although there was not doubt much discussion in the neighborhood about emigration, the newlyweds settled in the little cottage at Eck. Their home had a large living room, bedroom and kitchen. The living room was provided with French windows and two other windows. There was a hall between rooms. The kitchen had two windows and a door provided with a 2x4 beam that was placed into two wooden hooks to make a secure latch. It seems there was a **kamin** (iron stove) in addition to the **spisugn** (fireplace and oven). The oven was large enough to accommodate about 20 loaves of bread.

Lovisa's duties included the usual barnyard chores in addition to the housekeeping work. She kept a pig for butchering, a cow, a sheep, two hens and a rooster to help provide food and clothing for the family. There was a big cat to keep rodents under control, but no dog. In fact the children did not remember ever seeing a dog in the homeland.

The first meal of the day was **rågmjölgröt** (rye meal mush) which Lovisa served in a large earthenware **fäta** (dish) with about a tablespoon of **smör** (butter) in the center in a small hollow. Sometimes as she stirred the mush she would sing a silly little ditty:

Sina gröt är kokat i en grotta

His pudding is cooked in a kettle

**Och eck i en span
Gud bevara Kvina och Man**

And slop in a bucket
God watch over woman and man

The children stood around the stool on which the fät was placed and dipped their spoon of gröt into the melted **smör** as they shared the common bowl. At times Lovisa's thoughts would return to her youth in Skåne and she would tell her favorite joke showing that even the **rikfolk** sometimes had a pesky problem:

“Mor, där krypa lus på gröt.”

“Mother, a louse is crawling on the porridge.”

“Tyst, Hans, det är krydda.”

“Quiet, Hans, that is spice.”

“Ja, men Mor, kann krydda krypa?”

“Yes, but mother, can spices creep?”

Before she could get at her day's work the smallest children had to be given naps and Lovisa would croon to them another of her silly little songs:

**Skatan sat på vört hostack
Och kallade på sena sma dottern-
U-u-så kalt de tär
Vi frysa på vora små fatter.**

The magpie sat on our haystack
And called to her small daughters-
Oo-oo so cold it is
We freeze on our small feet.

The children were taught to neither be seen nor heard in a disturbing way. They did not beg nor demand that which was not offered them. They learned to address their elders using the polite plural form “**ni**” and never the common “**du**”. Their elders were greeted with a shaking of hands and the girls would **niga** (curtsy) while the boys respectfully removed their caps and bowed heads. If there was any unapproved behavior the children never tattled on one another.

Lovisa had been given permission to have the children gather and drag home fallen branches from a nearby wood. There was an old man who had complained to Lovisa about Alfred's (Sven) fighting with his son. Alfred decided to get even with the old man and he had the other children help him build a shelter or blind out of branches and set near a place where **gubben** (the old man) drove his cow. The children hid and jumped out to frighten the cow and she ran away. When Lovisa heard of this **pojkestreck** (boyish prank) she decided all deserved **pisk** or **stryk** (a whipping). She sent them out to fetch switches and starting with the oldest whipped bare bottoms with decreasing severity to the youngest. Alfred said later that the trick was well worth the punishment.

HOUSEHOLD CHORES

When it became necessary for Lovisa to leave home to give help to neighbors, Alfred would usually hurry for **småsmaka** (taste) of everything edible in the house. Then he would organize the children for housecleaning. The floors of the whole house would be scrubbed using a hand whisk of tightly twisted straw and sand to scour. The floor was then rinsed clean and dried using sphagnum or peat moss. The work was fairly divided between the three oldest children and each took a small child to sit on his or her assigned part of the room. This kept the little ones from running over the clean floor.

Before they left Sweden, Alfred and the three oldest girls had attended **småskola**, and Alfred had

his **bekräftelse** (confirmation). Alfred had been to a photographer to have a tintype made for the occasion – a bit I removed from the family album to give to his granddaughter Margaret Eckblad (Mrs. William Peter) Drechel, of Fergus Falls, MN. Mary had learned the alphabet and some counting.

Lovisa tended a garden and in the spring she asked a **nästaman** (neighbor) to come to **plöja** (plow) her small plot. She and the older children would drop pieces of potato in the furrows and then Mary would follow dropping peas behind them. The early maturing peas were harvested before the potatoes. Her method conserved space and although she did not know about nitrogen fixing bacteria, the microbes provided needed fertilizer for the crop of tubers to be harvested in the fall. There were plentiful apples and pears, and also high bush cranberries and lingonberries as well as strawberries. The fruit was eaten fresh and never preserved since sugar was a rarity.

In the early autumn Lovisa went out to dig **torv** (peat) which the children helped with by picking up the chunks and carrying them in baskets to the barn where they were piled to dry for use in the round iron heater. Lingonberries were gathered by the children and the juice was squeezed out and saved to be used for special occasions when it was rubbed on the stove to give it a blue luster.

When the flax was ready to be harvested, it was cut or pulled by hand and carefully carried with the heads together to be pounded or threshed in the barn or granary. After the seed had been removed, the stems were pounded and then soaked or retted to separate the strong fibers. After bleaching, the fiber was spun into fine threads. The flax thread was woven during the cold months to make fine linen material for tablecloths, sheets, pillow cases and underwear.

Lovisa received most of her wool fleece by working for others, for a share of the clip. The wool had to be carded, spun and woven or knitted to make scarves, dresses, aprons, and stockings. Weaving continued all fall to have new garments for Christmas. Mary, who was six, and Amelia, eight, took turns sitting by the spinning wheel to feed the wool. When they became too tired to continue their task Lovisa would give them a small piece of bread and a **smaka** (taste) of **sylte** (pressed pork) or a pig's toe to suck on. If Lovisa became too tired she would stretch out on the seat of the loom to rest her body for an hour. All the spinning, knitting, weaving and sewing provided each of the four girls with a new dress and a pair of brightly colored striped stockings for Christmas. Aprons and dresses were made of lovely stripes or plaids. The dresses were of simple princess style with a large pocket. **Kluta** (scarves) were also made of plaid material with long fringes.

Twice a year the big chore of doing laundry was done. Ashes had been saved and stored in a barrel. Before washday, water was poured into the barrel and allowed to slowly seep through to make a strong lye which would cut the grease since they had no soap. The soiled clothing and the lye solution were taken to the river. The clothes were soaked in the river then placed on a slightly sloping bench and pounded with a paddle after first being boiled in the lye water. Then they were turned and pounded again and dipped again into the tub of lye solution until the dirt had been loosened and partially knocked out. The following day everything was boiled in lye water then thoroughly rinsed in the river. After drying and carefully folding they were piled and pressed by sitting on them. "This", Mary writes, "was not pressing a button to do laundry!"

FOOD PREPERATION

When the barley was harvested, Lovisa began the chore of brewing beer. To **brygga dricka** (brew beer) she used two large barrels. First she filled two large buckets with barley and covered it with warm water. This was kept warm until the barley was well sprouted. The sprouted grain was then dried in the oven and toasted to a nice brown color. Lovisa then went to the haymow and took long, clean straw from the threshing which she placed in alternate layers with the malted barley into the barrels which had been set on blocks and provided with a bung at the bottom for draining the brew. Water was poured over this until the barrel was partly filled and the liquid was drained at intervals and poured back and forth until fermented and ready for consumption. It was then stored in a barrel for later enjoyment. Everyone had his **dricka for Jul** (drink for Christmas).

Each year the cow was expected to produce a calf. He was fed milk for a month then one day he was given all the milk he could swallow in the morning before butchering. When the calf was butchered, Lovisa removed the stomach and emptied the contents then carefully scraped the stomach lining to get the enzyme rennet.

The scrapings and the stomach contents were mixed with a little salt and some cumin (caraway seed) and replaced in the stomach sac, sewed tight and hung to dry thoroughly. In the fall, neighbors would come from up to two miles away carrying brimming buckets of milk. A large wash boiler was filled with the milk and the rennet added. After this had stood in a warm place, it coagulated and formed curds and whey. The curds were formed into either one large cheese or two smaller ones. It was turned and rubbed regularly until it had ripened and formed a nice crust. This was the **Julost** - Christmas cheese.

When a cow freshened, the first two milkings were given to the calf to provide it with the special nourishment and disease resistance in the cholesterol. The third milking could be shared with the family to make **råmjolkskaka** which is a custard pudding. The traditional recipe called for a gallon of fresh milk, 4 well beaten eggs, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg. This was stirred well and placed in a baking dish to bake at a low temperature for an hour.

Ostkaka was another custard dish but it required the use of rennet*. To prepare this: 1/2 tablet of rennet was dissolved in 1/2 cup of milk and added to 2 quarts of whole milk, 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 2 egg yolks. This mixture was allowed to stand in a warm place until it separated into curds and whey. The curds were removed and placed in a baking dish to be covered with a mixture of 1 cup of cream, 1/2 cup sugar, 2 well beaten eggs, and 6 crushed cardamom seeds which had been well beaten together. The pudding was then baked in a moderate oven for an hour and served warm with a sweet sauce of strawberries or lingonberries. The cold ostkaka could be sliced and warmed in cream or butter. A variation of the ostkaka recipe used both curds and whey. It was called **Gräddkaka**. These puddings were considered very choice treats for special occasions. **Ostkaka** translates to cheesecake.

Late in the fall the pig was ready to be butchered. This chore was done when weather was cold

so the meat would keep well and be fresh for Christmas. Lovisa would get up early to have plenty of boiling water ready for scalding the pig. When the neighbor men arrived to butcher, Lovisa served them sup of **dricka** (beer). Then the work began with Lovisa stirring the blood to prevent clotting when the men stuck the pig. The blood was later used to prepare **blod pölse** with rice, cubed pork and seasoning. Some blood was mixed with rye flour and placed in a bag to be fried as **blodbröd**. The blodbröd was stored to be used later to make a nourishing gravy.

While the men scraped the pig skin and finished butchering, Lovisa served them some of her precious, hoarded coffee to refresh and warm them. The next day Lovisa was busy cutting the meat and dividing it into portions according to the use for which it was intended. The small gut had to be washed thoroughly and saved in salt water to be used as sausage casing. The head was carefully picked to save every morsel of edible meat which was boiled and pressed to make **sylte** or headcheese. Pieces of lean side meat were used to make **rullapöse** (pork rolls), liver was made into **leverkorv** (liver sausage), chopped meat, onions and potatoes were used for **potateskorv** (potato sausage). The fat trimmings were put aside to be rendered into lard. The raw meat products were placed in a brine to prevent spoilage. When Lovisa had to **stuppa korv** (stuff sausage) she sat on a low stool while she forced the ground meat into the casings.

Spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, brewing, and butchering kept Lovisa busy all through the fall preparing for the celebration of Christmas. As the days shortened and the holiday approached, she began her baking. Bread was kneaded in a large wooden tub and baked in the **spis** - the large fireplace oven that held up to about 20 loaves of bread. Fine rye flour was used to make **limpebröd** that was seasoned with anise and orange peel. A few buns made from white flour were so delicious that Mary said she could easily have eaten a whole one by herself. **Knäckebröd**, the crisp, hard, cracker-like sheets made from coarse rye flour were prepared with a hole in the center so that they could be strung on a pole and hung near the ceiling to keep dry. Paper-thin **flatbröd** was a special Swedish treat for the holidays.

The house had to be thoroughly cleaned and decorated. Lovisa took a white **servett** (napkin) of fine linen and fastened it to the ceiling with an apple in the center. Four other apples, choicest they had, were fastened at each corner to beautify the ceiling. The iron heater was rubbed clean and polished with lingonberry juice to give it a bluish luster. Alfred and the other children went to the woods and gathered branches of juniper and spruce which they dragged home to chop into small pieces.

CHRISTMAS

On December 24th – **Julafton** – everyone was scrubbed and bathed and dressed in clean clothing. At four in the afternoon the family **Julfest** began when the children gathered around a stool for “**doopa i gröten**” with each child dipping his morsel of rye bread into the tasty broth in which korv and ribs had been boiled. Then Karl sang “**Gladje Julafton**” (Happy Christmas Eve) in his strong, clear tenor voice. The meal was finished and after the table had been cleared the finely chopped evergreens prepared by the children were spread over the floor and the **spies** (oven) filling the air with fresh fragrance. The celebration was all by candlelight, since Lovisa seldom used her small coal oil lamp because of the expense of the fuel.

Christmas Day before dawn was the time to walk several miles to the church to celebrate **Julotta**. Lunches were carried and all were well protected against the cold since the little church was unheated. This early morning candlelight service was a time to sing “**Var Hälsad Sköna Morgonstund**” (All Hail, Thou Radiant Morning Star) and “**Nar Juldagsmorgon Glimmar**” (When Christmas Morn is Breaking). The celebration of Christmas lasted through **trettondedag** (Epiphany) and during the two weeks the family had a couple of **Julfests**.

MIDWIFE, UNDERTAKER, COOK

Lovisa was constantly called upon by neighbors to serve them as midwife, undertaker and as cook for weddings and funerals. Often she worked all day then had to walk home several miles at night to be with her family. A big wedding often lasted for a week and was a long time to be away from home and household chores. As midwife, Lovisa assisted over 200 infants into this world. When death came to the neighborhood she was called upon to “lay out” the deceased for in those days there was no professional mortician or embalmer.

On one occasion when Lovisa was asked to lay out the body of a neighbor she completed her task while the family went to the pastor to make funeral arrangements. While she awaited their return Lovisa put on the coffee pot and sat sipping the hot drink when she looked up to see the body of the dead man standing in the door shivering as he muttered, “**Jag frysa**” (I am freezing). The man had suffered a rare condition called **skendöd** or catalepsy, in which the vital signs are suspended and one appears to be dead. Lovisa was not taken aback but poured another cup of coffee and invited, “**Sätt die, Nels, och ha en kopp kaffe**” (Sit down, Nels, and have a cup of coffee.)

Lovisa once was asked to take a motherless infant into her home and she nursed it, sharing her milk with her own until both were weaned. She kept this child for about two years.

In 1869 there had been a great emigration from Sweden to America largely caused by the famines following the disastrous crop failures of 1867-1868, and by the pull factor of the Homestead Act of 1862. But movement out of the land had leveled off until it peaked again in the 1880's. A severe economic depression came to Sweden in 1879, especially affecting the timber and iron industries. Emigration from timber areas increased tenfold. The strong iron industry was faced with competition from the German Krupp works that was aggravated when the Swedish military itself placed cannon orders with Krupp. Metal workers and blacksmiths from northern Småland and other areas moved out in unusually large numbers. But the economy of the agricultural sector also suffered because of Russian and American penetration of the Swedish grain market, unprotected by tariffs. Bankruptcies doubled in the countryside as the price of rye, the main grain crop, dropped 50%. Western Småland, which had seen a moderate level of emigration now had a mass movement of its peasants. Kronobergslän which was a prime agricultural district responded strongly to the pull factor of a flood of advertisements, newspaper articles and letters from earlier emigrants to the land across the Atlantic. Swedish emigration of 12,800 in 1879 peaked to 44,500 in 1882.

TRAVELING TO AMERICA (FROM MALMÖ BY WAY OF LIVERPOOL TO NEW

YORK)

Now Karl and Lovisa, like so many of their neighbors, began to think of the prospects for a more secure future for the family in the Midwest of the North American continent. Like their neighbors, they discussed and made quick decisions – studies have shown that plans were completed within a month.

A shoemaker was engaged to make rough leather shoes for all the children to replace the wooden shoes they were accustomed to wearing. A tailor and his daughter came with a sewing machine to sew two dresses for each girl out of Lovisa's **hemväänd** (home woven) plaid materials. She wove two lovely headscarves and shawls for each girl. Lovisa's children would be decently clad for their journey to the new home. And finally a sale of the property that would not be taken was held. Lovisa was unhappy to see her brother Andreas and Anna Stina, the wife she disliked, show up at the auction. But she was cheered by the many friends and neighbors who came bringing gifts of food and offers of help to accompany her to the port of debarkation. On the day of departure, Lovisa boarded the **Vita Stjärne Lina** (White Star Line) vessel with six children walking hand in hand in pairs ahead of her and she carrying little David. It was the month of May.

Travel across the Atlantic after 1870 had been shortened to about 8 days with the improvements in ships and the use of steam for power. (Lovisa and the children came over after David's birth sometime after 1882). The White Star Line had launched a new liner, the Oceanic, in 1870. It was 420 feet in length and 42 feet in width. Emigrants were crowded into cabins with a single porthole and contained four full size bunks which were simple wooden shelves. Lovisa and five little ones crowded into one upper bunk with her "**enfaldig**" charges in the one below. Alfred (Sven – the oldest child) found a larger boy with whom to share a bunk, and **Amanda** (Manilla's Grandma) shared with another older girl. (It appears that Karl (Carl) was already in Minnesota.)

Alfred found that that his willingness to help with cattle and other chores brought him into good graces with the crew. He was allowed to go to the gallery to prepare coffee for his mother and occasionally receive treats and special water allowances for the family. Water was rationed and the passengers kept their daily allotment in their bunks in bottles. On one occasion Gustave had a bed wetting accident and the simpleton in the bunk below asked his wife where the water that dripped on his face was coming from. Lovisa heard Peter Gustave's question and with typical alertness and quick wit called down that the cork had come out of the bottle.

There was considerable excitement one time on the boat when little Gustave strayed and became lost.

Mary was a problem on the voyage since she was almost constantly seasick. Whenever she smelled the stew that was brought to the cabins and ladeled into the passengers' bowls, she lost her appetite and became sick. Lovisa's remedy for this was a piece of dry rye bread. Although Mary remembers seeing long tables on shipboard, she cannot recall ever sitting at table for a meal. The evening meal was no more appetizing than the stew for it was oatmeal cooked in a large iron pot like that used to cook slop for pigs. The passengers pressed around the pot extending their bowls for the gruel which was spooned out with a little syrup. Those who thought

they had received too little would try to get a second helping but this was usually unsuccessful. Mary remembered only one occasion on the journey when she had a desire for food. She saw a woman in Liverpool eating an orange and she wished she could just have a bite of the peeling thrown on the street.

Lovisa warned the children that if they strayed in the city they would be picked up by policemen, therefore they must always remain close together and hold one another's hand. The children's fear had them imagine great giants who were anxious to nab them.

The usual route taken from Malmö by the British Lines, such as the White Star, was to Hull on the east coast of England, thence by rail across to Liverpool from where the Atlantic voyage began. The family was delayed several days at Liverpool. Both Mary and Anna remembered the tall buildings of London which they probably confused with Liverpool.

The family arrived in New York in late June. They huddled together to sleep on the bare floor at Ellis Island. They remembered the food received as being good. They were impressed by the street cars drawn by four or six horses. Everyone had a fresh change of clothing before starting the long rail trip to Minnesota. But that trip was fun!

MINNESOTA

The sleepy family was traveling through Minnesota when they were told that they had gone beyond their destination and were put off the train at 2:00 a.m. Lovisa, true to form, soon found someone to talk with and got needed help. The next return train took them back to where they should have gotten off and there at the Gaylord railway station stood Carl waiting for them. Lovisa, Alfred and Amanda all spied him at the same time. Mary stood asking "**Vart as far?**" (Where is dad). Then when he picked her up, her first words were begging him to buy her new shoes since she so much hated her rough leather ones.

After living at Gaylord, Arlington and Winthrop, the Eckblads established their permanent home at Lafayette. They were among the first to join the Swedish Lutheran Church at Lafayette and Carl served as janitor for as long as his health permitted. Hilda was their first child born in America. She was followed by the twins Arthur and Theodore, who died in infancy. Arthur was the eleventh child, followed by Elsie and Mabel. The 14th infant, Walter, did not survive.

Somehow Lovisa was always able to communicate with others regardless of language barriers. In Arlington they were the only family who did not use the German tongue. But strong ties of friendship developed there as everywhere.

I have wonderful, warm memories of Grandmother's home on the hill near the village of Lafayette. The road went up a hill beside a deep sandpit that held small amphibians and insects but no fish to nibble on the grandchildren's bent pins attached with string to sticks. Across the narrow road were the gates of the cemetery. At the crest of the hill stood Grandma's house on the left and her chicken yard to the right adjoining the cemetery fence. The chicken yard was shaded by a large mulberry tree that fascinated us since we had never seen trees that bore berries. The henhouse floor was hard packed clay that was kept swept with an old broom. Beyond stood the

granary and corn crib handy with grain for the hens.

The front door, which was little used, faced to the south looking down toward Grandma's garden and beyond that to the cow pasture which bordered the Minneapolis and St. Louis railroad tracks. The children's bare feet were used to the dusty path leading to the pasture since at milking time the cows had to be chased up the hill. In the railroad ditch there was wet soil in which yellow marsh marigolds, which we called buttercups, grew. Our toes pressed into the damp soil down there as we stretched to pick the pretty flowers to bring to Grandma. Clutching the limp bouquets we would start the cows toward home. The contented beasts would switch their tails to dislodge pesky flies and we would sometimes impatiently prod the cows when they stopped to snatch tempting clumps of grass. Then they would run with their swinging bags oozing milk to the ground.

The commonly used back door opened into a large kitchen with a long, dark closet to the right where work clothing was hung. Grandmother maintained her discipline by using this closet as an isolation room after the switch had been applied to the offender's calves. At the back of the kitchen there was a long table on the left and a black Monarch range to the right. I remember the table as a roomy place for us to sit with our bowls of Cream of Wheat which Grandma cooked in milk and ladled from a big kettle. There was a door to either side midway down the kitchen. The



one on the right led into the "company" dining room. Toward the front of the house from the dining room was a parlor with a large dark box on the inside wall. When she opened the doors to the box, Granma could pull out a double bed for adult guests.

The sitting room off the left side of the kitchen was a cozy family retreat where Grandpa would relax in his comfortable chair with Muggsie, his little pug dog, in his lap. On the table beside him lay his **Bible** and **Postilla** (Book of homilies or sermons). The room opening toward the back of the house from this room was Grandma's private domain and I cannot recall ever seeing any but her enter there. To the front another parlor was located. The design of the house was to accommodate two families since Mary and Frank Johnson occupied the right side when they lived in Lafayette.

Between the house and the field stood a platform swing with slatted seats for four adults or any number of kids. Nowhere but at Grandma's house had we seen such a fascinating contraption and we loved to sit there and pump it.

Grandma was a fearless defender of her family and property. On one evening the family sat around the long

kitchen table enjoying the warmth of the Monarch range when they were startled by a loud explosive sound and a peculiar odor. They could see nothing wrong in the house, so Grandma lit a lantern and went out to see what mischief was afoot. She suspected that hobos camping near the rail road tracks beyond the pasture might have caused the disturbance. So the family went searching with Grandma leading carrying a lantern and the children and Grandpa trailing behind. They found nothing wrong and returned to their beds mystified. Next morning, David took his bicycle from the spot near the stove where he had left it the night before. The mystery was solved when he saw the tire which had burst from the heat.

When night came, the children were sent up the front stairs to the garret. From under the bed they pulled a trundle bed for added sleeping space for visiting grandchildren. Tired but with stomachs comfortably filled, they all pulled up their covers. The house, children, Grandma's grandchildren who had come to live with her when Alfred's wife died, would rattle their meaningless "**Fader Vors**" (Our Fathers) and visiting youngsters recited their "Now I lay me's". Then the kerosene lamp was carried down the stairs. Crickets chirped and the sounds of the day were stilled.

When the Bergrens drove up the hill in their Model T Ford, there would be much hugging and kissing. Then Grandma would run to the henhouse and grab a heavy hen and with her fingers test the width between pelvic bones to prove a poor layer. The luckless fowl was quickly beheaded and plucked and dressed ready for the stove. Grandma made a basket with her gingham apron and picked a dozen eggs into it. The chicken was soon on the stove and Grandma sat down with the twelve egg whites in a large bowl. With her whisk she whipped the whites to a froth that stood in peaks. Then she slowly folded in cream of tartar, sugar and almond extract and finally the flour to make her famed **angelmat** or angle food cake.



The dinner table would be set in the dining room and after all were seated Grandma would begin to **kruusa** (fuss). There would be a large bowl of mashed potatoes and another of chicken swimming in gravy. Her favored vegetable was "**arter**" (peas). There would be homemade bread and butter, and finally the cake and coffee.

The coffee ritual began with the nut-brown beans being dumped into Grandma's grinder which she held between her knees as she turned the handle. The grounds were taken from a small drawer at the bottom of the grinder and mixed with a little beaten egg and water then dumped into the tall enamelware pot of boiling water and let come to a rolling boil then set to the back of the range to simmer until served. When the cups were filled the load sugar would be passed and one could sugar **sockerbit** (suck on a sugar loaf) after dipping it in the delicious brew.

When the cares of the day weighed too heavily on her

shoulders, Grandma would walk swiftly down the farm road and open the cemetery gates. Then she walked to the quiet spot where her **trofast** (faithful) Carl Isaac rested and beside him poor David who had died when only thirty one years of age. In this silent shaded spot she found peace and solitude until she felt strengthened, then she would pick herself up and hasten back to resume her endless chores.

When Grandma left her home on the hill and came to live with us at Clarkfield, I often sat home with her when my parents were away. She would tell and retell stories about her life but I never heard stories about the sailing across the Atlantic. She told of famine and how tree bark was mixed in the stretch bread. She told of chewing meat to a pulp and finger feeding her infants when she had insufficient milk for their nourishment. She told of difficult days and more often of happy days and nights dancing after a long day of work. On my last visit with her, Lovisa begged me to promise that I would see her buried with the gold wedding band on her finger. True to Karl Isaac in time and eternity!



Blenda Marie (Mary) - 4th
child of Lovisa and Carl



Sven Alfred – oldest child of
Lovisa and Carl

FAMILY TREES:

Parents & Siblings	Spouse & Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonas Gustafsson (1803-) Katharina Erlandsdotter (1806-) Anders Peter Jonasson (1827-1827) Maria Christina Jonasdatter (1830-) Anna Stina Jonasdatter (1833-) Solomen Jonasson (1835-) Anders Peter Jonasson (1838-) Johan Gustaf Jonasson (1845-) Ingrid Gustava Jonasdatter (1850-) Emma Charlotta Jonasdatter (1853-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lovisa Svendsdotter (1849-1942) Sven Alfred Eckblad (1871-1927) Amanda Sofia Eckblad (1872-) Augusta Amelia Eckblad (1874-1934) Blenda Marie Eckblad (1876-1967) Gustaf Leonard Eckblad (1878-) Anna Alice Eckblad (1880-1946) David Eckblad (1882-1913) Hilda Olivia Eckblad (1885-1912) Arthur Eckblad (1887-1887) Theodore Eckblad (1887-1887) Arthur Eckblad (1888-1929) Elsie Nina Eckblad (1890-1961) Mabel Bertina Eckblad (1891-) Walter Theodore Eckblad (1893-1893)

Karl Isaak Jonasson Eckblad
Birth 1841-10-06 in [Fållen under Eka, Ljungby, Kronobergs Län, Småland, Sweden](#)
Death 1910-11-23 in [Lafayette, Nicollet Co., MN](#)

Lovisa Svendsdotter
Birth 1849-05-19 in [Hörsett Skattegård, Berga, Kronobergs Län, Sweden](#)
Death 1942-04-17 in [Lafayette, Nicollet Co., MN](#)

Amanda Sofia Eckblad

Birth **1872-10-27** in [Bäck, Ljungby, Kronobergs Län, Småland, Sweden](#)
 Death

[View her family tree](#)
[Hide family members](#)
[More options](#)

Parents & Siblings	Spouse & Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karl Isaak Jonasson Eckblad (1841-1910) Lovisa Svendsdotter (1849-1942) Sven Alfred Eckblad (1871-1927) Augusta Amelia Eckblad (1874-1934) Blenda Marie Eckblad (1876-1967) Gustaf Leonard Eckblad (1878-) Anna Alice Eckblad (1880-1946) David Eckblad (1882-1913) Hilda Olivia Eckblad (1885-1912) Arthur Eckblad (1887-1887) Theodore Eckblad (1887-1887) Arthur Eckblad (1888-1929) Elsie Nina Eckblad (1890-1961) Mabel Bertina Eckblad (1891-) Walter Theodore Eckblad (1893-1893) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charles Meyer (1870-) Ernest John Meyer (1896-1973) Francis Carl Meyer (1897-1955) Clarence Elmer Meyer (1900-) Manilla Meyer (-1981)



Ernest John Meyer

Birth **1896-02-07** in [Glencoe, MN](#)
Death **1973-11-10**

[View his family tree](#) [Hide family members](#) [More options](#)

Parents & Siblings

- [Charles Meyer](#) (1870-)
- [Amanda Sofia Eckblad](#) (1872-)
- [Manilla Meyer](#) (-1981)
- [Francis Carl Meyer](#) (1897-1955)
- [Clarence Elmer Meyer](#) (1900-)

Spouse & Children

- [Pauline Kjelleberg](#) (-)
- [Charles Thomas Meyer](#)
1920 – 1989
- [Ann Amanda Meyer](#)
1921 –
- [Ernst John Meyer](#)
1924 – 1992
- [Manilla Elaine Meyer](#)
1927 –
- [Theresa Louise Meyer](#)
1929 –
- [Jean Ardelle Meyer](#)
1930 –

Manilla Meyer Bjella's family tree

