

ELLEN Anderson's Recall of  
of Her Family

Grandmother Emma Louise Bengston was born in Hunnestad Sweden, Dec. 9, 1864. Her mother was older than her father and died when grandmother was married. He married again in about 6 months. He had a very good voice and lead the church choir.

In Grandmother's Church in Sweden, the Prost (Priest) was appointed by the king which was an honor. They had boxes of straw for the people to take off their shoes and put their feet in to keep them warm.

A young cousin, Anna Swanson lived with them and one time her father punished Anna very hard. Aunt Ellen asked grandmother why he punished her so hard. Grandmother said, "In Sweden you don't ask why." Grandmother then dressed her little cousin and packed her clothes and took her to her grandmother to live until she grew up.

One time grandmother and her brother went to visit an uncle that was very wealthy. He owned most of the town Ryda Holm. He had a house with 13 gables on the top floor. Each gable was to a room for a servant. They hiked there, but their uncle sent them home on the train bana.

Grandmother graduated from school and went to college for a year, Interior Decorator and to learn to be a seamstress. She became a very good one and made slipcovers and drapes for a fine hotel in Stockholm. She went home weekends.

Her father, a farmer, did many things. They had a tannery and their house was on a shore with rock ledges like steps. They had a grandfather clock so large a child could hide in it. He was also a Mortician. He made caskets, soaked the wood to round it for the top and painted it black. Grandmother tufted it with black tulle. They had a building where they would keep the body as long as two weeks, until people could come for the funeral. The body would freeze and keep. He had a black carriage and black horse for the funeral.

When women died in Sweden they could leave their money to their children. Emma's mother left money to Emma and her two brothers, Lars and Carl. Emma was making beds, turning mattresses etc. and found a letter from her brothers saying she could have their share of the inheritance since they were successful and well to do. The inheritance amounted to about \$9,000\* but her father had taken the money himself and didn't tell her. \* 1870's

Emma was hurt and angry and decided to go to America. She had married Anders Elof Anderson and had a 6 month old baby by then, born in Barberg. Aunt Ellen Rosalie asked her mother why she married her father. Her mother said, "He was so handsome." He had a good position in a brewery.

My father was 6 months old (Karl Hjalmar) when they came to America. It was a long hard trip on a poor ship that was tossed about in many storms. They were supposed to stay in the hold during storms but the captain allowed grandmother on deck with the baby where she would sit holding him. The captain had her eat at his table. One baby died and they wrapped it in several

layers of canvas and buried it at sea with service.

Uncle August Engstrom (father's brother) and brother Lars were in Ridgway so they went to Ridgway. They stayed there 1 or 2 months and then moved to Reynoldsville. Ernest Birgar (Uncle Bill) and Ellen were born in Reynoldsville. They had 2 boarders for awhile until a woman came and started a boarding house. Grandma was glad to see them go as they cursed and my father Carl was copying them. One time Grandpa had some friends playing cards. One man was cursing and Grandma lead him out to the porch and told him not to come back until he stopped cursing. Ellen asked what her father said. Emma said he just laughed.

Grandma and Grandpa loved and respected each other. Every time Grandpa passed her he would pat her on the head.

They moved to DuBois. John DuBois liked the Swedish people and encouraged them to come. Grandpa didn't have a trade, so he worked in the tannery and the lumber mill and in the DuBois mansion garden. Grandpa kept the yard of their home like a beautiful park.

They had 5 more children. Einar, <sup>(JENNIE)</sup> Jane Elizabeth, Harry William, Nellie Guiora and Hilma Linnea. Hilma died of pneumonia at age 2. Ellen was eight years older than Harry and took care of him for Grandma. One time the carriage got away from her and went flying down a hill. It hit a bridge and he flew out. He wasn't hurt, he just sat there smiling.

They had many happy memories of their childhood and loved their mother greatly. Many people came to write letters and doctors had her to help deliver babies. One baby weighed only 2 pounds. Emma put it in a box lined with cotton batting and fed her with a dropper. She also cooked onions and wrapped the baby with the warm onions around her body. She (Pearson) grew up and was head of the milk corporation for dairy farmers.

When Ellen was 8 years old Steve Spellen, neighbor, killed his sister's boyfriend, Mike Rharer, because he thought he took his job. Aunt Ellen would watch Steve at target practice and he'd say "Hi Johanna" to her. She saw him drag the body out of the house. When the police came he jumped out the window and landed on a frozen cabbage head, ran and hid in the well where his brother worked. The police made his brother steam him out. He was put into the insane asylum. After that Mrs. Rharer went to Church every day and wore a mourning veil. Mrs. Spellen would drink and say, "My poor Stephen." Nora Spellen was very pretty with red hair. She left town and went to another brother and never came back to DuBois.

The Blakeslee family owned the electric company, the street cars and the tracks in DuBois. They lost everything during the depression. Mrs. Blakeslee would make a large kettle of vegetable soup every day and take it to the drug store. People would be sitting waiting for the soup.

When Mrs. Larson's baby was a week old Uncle Harry took him for a ride in his carriage all around town. Mrs. Larson was worried but Harry brought him back safely. The babies slept the whole time. Bob Larson grew up to be an official at the DuBois bank. Years ago people had to figure out their own interest when they made a deposit or withdrawal.

The Blakeslee boy dipped chocolate candy for Leona Fairmon's

candy store when he was 14 years old. Ellen asked him what he was going to be when he grew up. He said, "A doctor." He became a doctor and was Ellen and Harry's doctor.

Ellen learned to sew from her mother. She could cut and make beautiful clothes without a pattern. She made curtains for Leona Fairmons candy store. Harry went to Mechanics Institute to study Art.

Ellen, Jane, Nellie and Harry went to Rochester, NY for six years. Ellen sewed for a big department store. She was in charge of about 20 women. Nellie worked for PRR and went to Eastman School of Music. She played the piano and sang. Then she worked for BR&P railroad and PRR said they wouldn't ship on their line anymore for taking their good workers. Nellie was beautiful and a very nice person. Never spoke against anyone. She was engaged to marry Erick. He was a German U boat captain. He was killed in the war in 1939. \*Nellie had a nervous breakdown and would curse and say unkind things. Her family kept her in her bedroom until she died.

Jane was a lovely person. She married William Bonnar but three years later he died of pneumonia. In winter he took a steam bath and went outside and took a chill.

When they were children they had a St. Bernard dog named Ben. He would go to the store with Carl and carry the basket. After awhile Grandma could send Ben to the store alone. When he saw another dog he would set the basket down and roll the other dog over. Then he would pick up the basket and go on his way.

Uncle "Bill" had a horse they called a "hammer head" because he was mean and kept his ears down. One day he kicked Uncle Bill in the face. Uncle Bill had an ugly scar on his cheek the rest of his life.

\* Nellie had broken the engagement several years before the war - perhaps realizing what was on the horizon and that her brothers could be involved (?). These were years of the depression, and the railroad (PRR) kept laying off people and Aunt Nellie was doing the work of several. Also, at this time her mother had had a heart attack and Aunt Ellen, Uncle Harry & Nellie came home from Rochester to take care of her & the household. They probably depended a lot on Nellie's salary to keep going. She cracked.