

**A Synopsis of
Anna Charlotta (called Lotten) Petersdotter Andersson's
Family History**

Peter Magnus Andersson and Sophia Johanna Petersdotter brought up their family of six children in and around Huskvarna, Sweden. The six children were:

Hanna Augusta Petersdotter Andersson, 1864-1935

Gustav Emil Magnusson, 1866-1939

Karl Lambert Dahlstrom, 1868-1948

Anna Charlotta Petersdotter Andersson, 1871-1960 (My Grandmother)

Per Arvid Dahlstrom, 1874-1954

Alma Elisabet Petersdotter Andersson, 1877-1943

Much of what I have to say is speculation and is my "take" on how I think events transpired.

In 2000 I visited Huskvarna, Sweden, and was given a tour of Grandma and her siblings' early year habitats by two of their brother Gustav Emil's great grandchildren. Although I cannot understand Swedish, Gustav's Great Grandson let me videotape him telling about the various places where the Peter Magnus Andersson family grew up. I have not had his words translated yet. But I received the impression that they had a very loving upbringing in a very bucolic setting. It was a special day for me to be able to visit the land where our ancestors grew up. The family was not rich by any means, and when the children came of age, all of them, except Gustav Emil, emigrated to America to seek employment. Augusta, was the first to emigrate and it was she who was the inspiration for the rest to also emigrate. Before Ellis Island opened, emigrants landed at Castle Garden near the Battery in New York City, so it was there that at least Lotten and Augusta first stepped ashore in America. Grandma was the second sibling to come to America (1887). I believe she lived with Augusta for a short while before she went to New England to become an au pair (1887-1895) for a family in New Hampshire. Augusta may have been instrumental in helping Lotten get this job.

Lotten told my mother that the son of the family she worked for fell in love with her and when Grandma spurned his advances, he came after her with a knife. How I wish I knew more of the details of that story. Although Grandma's obituary says she and her parents became acquainted with The Salvation Army (SA) in Sweden, I don't believe The Army had come to Huskvarna by the time Grandma emigrated. In fact, it is difficult to put my finger on exactly when Grandma met The Army - or her future husband for that matter. My own speculation on the course of events is that after she spurned this young man, she left the household and went back to New York (Mom thinks she may even have gone back to Sweden for a while, but I find no evidence of that) perhaps living with Augusta for a while. It was during this period that she joined The Salvation Army, and it was during this period that she met my Grandfather, Sven Wiberg. Grandpa was in America establishing Swedish Corps for The Army. One of the places he was stationed for a while was at the New York #1 Corps - the Corps where Grandma was a soldier. It was shortly after this that Grandma went to The Salvation Army's Training College (1896). Her first and only Corps as a single officer was in Providence, Rhode Island (1897). There are letters exchanged in 1934 between my Grandparents (when Grandpa was in Sweden for a year conducting evangelistic meetings) intimating that it was in Providence where Grandpa proposed to Grandma.

They were married at The Salvation Army in New Haven, CT, on February 17, 1898, and they began their duties as Salvation Army Officers the very next day in New Britain, CT. There are accounts of their very difficult lives as Salvation Army Officers during this period which were written in a series of articles in the Swedish Stridsropet (A Salvation Army publication) by one of their former cadets, Hajalmar Swembel. Hajalmar interviewed Grandpa, and Grandpa describes their lives during this early period in The Army as very, very poor indeed. They subsisted by selling the War Cry (the American version of the Stridsropet) and collecting in taverns and at open air salvation meetings on street corners. The money collected had to be spent on rent for the meeting hall (which was also where they usually lived) and their food. Many of the soldiers of the Corps at that time were farmers and the farmers donated some of their meat and vegetables to them. So my Grandparents' honeymoon (if you will) was spent out collecting most every day just so they could live and help their soldiers.

Their second Corps was the Boston, MA, #1 Corps down near the wharfs in Boston. This is where my Dad, Hugo, was born on September 14, 1899. Their soldiers (congregation) were mostly dockworkers and sailors - a rough bunch who usually came to The Army to get a meal, get warm, and sober up. In the process, many were converted to Christianity by my Grandparents.

Five months later they were transferred to Chicago, Illinois. It was either before or during the trip that Dad became seriously ill and nearly died. The doctor had given up hope. Grandpa heard a dog baying outside during the night and according to lore this meant someone would die, so he was convinced that Dad would die. But Grandma had a knock down, drawn out fight with the Lord and made unspoken promises to God that she would fulfill if the Lord would spare Dad's life. Dad lived, so her prayers worked and I'm sure Grandma fulfilled her promises to the Lord.

During their stay in Chicago, two more sons were born to them - Sam and Kal. My Grandparents remained in Chicago until 1905 at which time The Army transferred them to Sweden. They remained in Sweden until 1920. During their time in Sweden they were appointed as Training College Principals in Stockholm. From all accounts, they were beloved by their Cadets. They were teachers, Grandma's specialty being SA Orders and Regulations and Grandpa's, doctrine. It was during this time that their last child, Sven Bramwell, was born in 1907 - their only son born in Sweden.

Dad writes lovingly of their growing up years. Although my Grandparents were dedicated to The Army, they managed to spend "quality" time with the boys. When the boys left home they would write very lovingly of their childhood memories (especially the Christmas memories) - especially Kal. One of their daily rituals was reading from the Bible before they went to bed. Theirs was a Victorian upbringing. They were all extremely polite, courteous, and deferential to their parents and elders. Grandpa was a big man, imposing, silent and gruff and demanded respect and obedience by a look and a grunt rather than long speeches. Grandma was strict (it was a given that she was to be obeyed) and the worst sin, in her opinion, was lying. On the other hand, she was extremely loyal much as my mother was. Grandma's life revolved around her family and The Army.

In 1914 The Army transferred the family to Japan to be the Training College Principals. What an exotic place to grow up! How I wish I had had the forethought to interview Dad about his time spent in Japan, but alas . . . Dad was 15 when they arrived in Japan. I cannot find any reference to the fact that he went to school in Japan so I think he had finished his schooling in Sweden before going to Japan. Anyhow, it was soon after that that he went to work for the Gadelius Company - a Swedish company with a branch in Japan; both Companies are still operating today. Dad bought a few shares of their stock and when he retired he cashed in the stocks (at the company's request) and donated the money (\$300 and some odd dollars) to the Japanese Training College requesting that they dedicate the library to Grandpa, which they did.

The boys learned Japanese and I believe my Grandparents did as well. However, in the beginning Grandpa had to have a translator. One of the things that bothered Grandpa was that all the women cadets sat in the back of the class and their eyes were always downcast! This annoyed Grandpa so he asked the translator to request that the women look at him when he spoke, but the translator knew this was taboo, so he did not pass on Grandpa's request. Still annoyed that the women did not comply, Grandpa insisted that he repeat his request, which the translator finally did. The women complied with much twittering and blushing. It took quite some time for the women to get over this ingrained taboo, but I gather they finally did.

After Kal and Sam finished their schooling, they also went to work for companies in Japan and when my Grandparents were transferred back to Stockholm in 1922, Dad and Sam remained to fulfill their contractual obligations to their respective companies. It was during this time that Dad had a nervous breakdown - in any case that is how his friend Frieda de Groot (an officer's daughter whose family was also stationed in Japan at the same time) referred to it in a letter she wrote to him. It is inferred that he was overworked by the Company. It was soon after this breakdown that he went to Korea to visit Salvation Army officer friends (the Bernsteins). He traveled with the officer throughout Korea to visit corps and rest and recuperate. It did seem to help. Soon after his return to Japan, he and Sam left for Sweden (1921) to begin their stint for King and Country by enlisting in the military. Dad still was not up to par, and, although there are pictures of him on skis and out in the country with the rest of his comrades, he soon was given a desk job - he was a good typist! I believe at this time Kal was working for the Gadelius Company in Sweden. He was too young for the military, and of course young Sven was also.

After his stint in the military, Sam went to work for the Gadelius Company in Malmo and Dad went to Germany (1922) and Switzerland (to visit Frieda) for a few months. As far as I can make out from the letters, he went to work for a short time with a German company and also was tutored in German by a man who became a good friend of his. Dad writes some very perceptive letters about the conditions in Germany at this time. Dad was a very good letter writer. I don't know what Dad was expecting of this trip to Germany, but it obviously didn't pan out because in September of 1922 he and Kal left Sweden for America and Columbia University. Kal passed the medical examination to get into the University, but Dad did not. The doctors recommended that he go out West to a warmer climate to recuperate and get his strength back with the understanding that, once recuperated, he would come back to Columbia and enroll again. Dad did just that. He ended up in Redlands, California, and, I believe, had the best time of his life. He got a job picking oranges and was very proud of the fact that he was one of the top pickers. He earned "\$3.15 per day, with the exception of rainy days." He also spent time in the mountains camping and fishing. Eventually he got a job at a garage in Victorville, CA, and met a man that he learned to respect and admire - Hugh Williams. They became very good friends. Dad was a little dismayed when Hugh got married and Dad did not get to see him as often.

Dad worked in California from September, 1922, to September, 1925 - three good years of rest and recuperation. He never did go back to Columbia. In 1925 he joined The Salvation Army and entered Training College in New York City. A month later my Grandparents were transferred from the Training College in Stockholm to America to head up the Eastern Scandinavian Department in New York City. In 1926 they bought a home in Bergenfield, New Jersey, and that is the home they eventually retired to in 1930.

Sam really disliked Malmo and soon moved back to Japan where he worked for Gadelius once again. He had a good paying job and very generously helped finance some of Kal's education - as did Dad and many other friends and family members. I think he also occasionally sent money to Dad. But Sam was restless there also. When Kal finished College, he got a job with Goodyear Rubber Company and went

to Akron, Ohio, for training. While there, Kal arranged to get Sam an interview with the Company president, and Sam came back to America in 1927, had the interview, was hired and began training. I think the Company was pleased to get them because of their knowledge of Scandinavian languages, and so after Sam's apprenticeship, he was sent to Norway to establish branches of the Goodyear Rubber Company in Oslo and throughout the country. I haven't quite sorted out the sequence of events in Sam's life yet, but I believe in 1931 he came back to Akron for training to prepare him to go to Africa to set up Goodyear branches there. In any case, he did go to Johannesburg in 1931 and worked for Goodyear until the depression struck and he lost his job with Goodyear. But it wasn't long afterwards that he obtained a job with Electrolux and I believe worked for them until he retired. Sam had two girlfriends that I know of. One he met in Japan as a teenager. She came back to the States while he remained in Japan. He carried on a long correspondence with her for many years. In fact, Kal kept up contact with her and she even came to some of his football games at Columbia. But when Sam finally came to America to train in Akron, he (or she) ended the relationship. It seems he fell in love with a girl in Akron also, but that too came to naught. It wasn't until he went to Africa that he met and married. Her name was Ende Truman, a nice English girl (as he described her). As far as I know Sam never returned to America and so no one ever met his wife - there is not even a picture of her as far as I know - and, also as far as we know, they never had any children. There were a few letters exchanged over the years, one of which was asking Dad to see if he could find a special medicine for Ende here in America - which I don't think ever happened. I think some of Sam's possessions were sent back to either Dad or Kal when he died, because I have many of the letters that Grandma wrote to Sam while he was in Africa. Some of them are still waiting to be transcribed (from the Swedish) and maybe new information will come to light. I think Sam died in 1968.

As stated above, Kal finished at Columbia in 1926 and soon after was hired by the Goodyear Rubber Company and began training in Akron, Ohio. He worked there for two years but in July of 1928 he too was sent to Norway to set up dealerships. He sailed on board the S.S. Stavangfrejord and while at sea wrote to Lotten on July 16, 1928: "Do you know, little mother, I believe I have really fallen in love? But I shall do nothing rashly. Life is indeed strange!" It truly was a shipboard romance. He had met Sonja! Sonja was on her way to be with her father and his family in Norway. They were married a year and three months later in Flekkefjord, Norway, with all of her father's family attending. My Grandparents were unable to attend, but Sam attended as Kal's best man. By 1930 they had moved back to America. Kal began work at Goodyear in New Jersey. Their first child (a girl) was born in Havana, Cuba, which is where Sonja's mother was born and raised and also lived while her husband was away on business. Kal and Sonja had three more children (two boys and a girl). One of the boys died very tragically in a fire in 1974.

Sven Bramwell lived at home with his parents until he was 35 years old. He had had much of his education in Japan and Sweden. Grandma had Sven when she was 36 years old and four years after Kaleb was born. He was 19 years old when my Grandparents moved to Bergenfield and 23 when they retired. It is difficult to get a "picture" of Uncle Sven because there were no letters exchanged because he did live at home. I think he did odd jobs in and around Bergenfield until the war broke out. Uncle Sven tried to enlist in the Army, but was turned down because one of his legs was shorter than the other. That is when he moved to Manhattan and got a job working in a plant that made war supplies. He had been going out with a Salvation Army officer's daughter prior to leaving home, but he met his future wife in the plant where he was working and they were subsequently married in 1942. Two years later their only child, a daughter, was born. Shortly after that they were offered jobs in a Florida restaurant by an acquaintance and they gladly accepted. They were very happy for quite a long time building their own house with a swimming pool, enjoying their work, and bringing up their daughter. Uncle Sven not only worked at the restaurant off and on, but also did odd painting and construction jobs. But gradually he began drinking and soon the disease got the better of him. My aunt really loved him but sadly filed for divorce after 18 years of marriage and they separated in

1959 when my cousin was in high school. Uncle Sven went downhill from there. Uncle Kal and Dad tried to help him over the years, but nothing worked. His illness left deep scars on his wife, daughter, and brothers. He died in a nursing home in Philadelphia in 1979 at age 72.

In 1982 Hugo and Mary's children (my siblings) started a tradition of meeting once a year in New Hampshire - every once in a while we would invite the grandchildren. Soon we invited Uncle Kal's and Uncle Sven's children, so we have gotten to know them better in later life than we did as children. It has been a very good experience and we all look forward to our yearly meeting.

Grandma kept in touch with her siblings throughout the years. While they were stationed in Sweden they visited her brother Gustav Emil quite often. Gustav's daughter Signe came to live with the family for a while when they lived in Stockholm. Kal, in one of his Christmas letters while at Columbia, describes a fantasy of his: He arrives home at Christmas to surprise them all and is greeted at the door by shy Signe who beams in delight at seeing him and rushes back, blushing and excited, to tell the others - leaving Kal standing at the door. There is a very charming picture of Grandma, Grandpa, Gustav Emil, Signe, and her sister Tyra sitting in front of Gustav's house in Huskvarna having tea at a linen draped table. I had the privilege of visiting that house in 2000, and found it much like it was in the picture. You can see pictures of the house on the web site. Gustav Emil is the only sibling who did not come to America. His Great Granddaughter took me to the water-driven (turbine and engine) mill and farm, Skärsägen, in Tranås, Sweden, where Gustav Emil moved in 1917 after his mill burned down in Jutaholm. His son Gunnar bought Skärsägen in about 1937, but it was eventually sold and is no longer owned by the family.

Although Augusta and Alma wrote to Grandma over the years (usually on her birthday), it wasn't until my Grandparents moved to America permanently in 1926 that they were able to see each other more often. I believe Augusta lived in Tenafly which was quite near their home in Bergenfield so they saw each other quite often. My oldest brother remembers playing with some of Augusta's children. But even before that (1919), I know Augusta and Ivar (her husband) were quite helpful to Dad and Kal when they arrived in America as teenagers to begin attending Columbia University. They both stayed with them for a while until the University officially opened and before Dad left for California.

Alma and Alfred Reinhold Moberg were married in 1902 in Astoria, Long Island, New York. They set up housekeeping in New Rochelle, New York. Alfred went into business for himself and did very well. Alma and their 11 children lived on their farm in Wappinger Falls, New York, for four years in the early 1920's. Alfred came up on the weekends. Alma's Grandaughter (whom I correspond with) says Alma was the world's best cook and a very loving mother. Grandma mentions that Alma stayed overnight at their house when Alma came to Tenafly to celebrate Augusta's 70th birthday in 1934 and had quite a bad asthma attack. I gather she suffered from asthma all her life. Grandma did not get to see Alma as much as Augusta because they lived too far away.

Arvid lived in Camden, New Jersey. There is not much written about him, but from letters I get the impression that he visited Grandma often. Arvid was a bachelor. My oldest brother remembers driving Arvid to Grandma's funeral and having a breakdown on the way; I can't remember if they made it to the graveside or not.

Karl Lambert settled in Texas. There are no letters from Karl, but there are quite a few from the female members of the family. My oldest brother visited them at their ranch (where they raised horses and pecans) while he was in the Air Force in 1950, but he does not remember much about the visit. Karl looks like a kindly gentleman in his pictures and his wife looks lovely. They had five children - four boys and a girl. I doubt that any of his siblings saw Karl again after he moved to Texas.

Arvid and Karl took the last name of Dahlstrom when they came to America and I have no idea why.

Dad still was not very strong (I believe he had anemia) and while he was in Training College he would quite often spend his day off (Tuesdays) at home in Bergenfield where he spent most of his time sleeping while Grandma did his wash and cooked for him!

Dad met Mom in Training College. I asked Mom if it was "love at first sight." She didn't answer the question outright. She said she didn't give it a thought because it was rumored that he was in love with Frieda de Groot (his friend from Japan). But one day some of the boy cadets stole Dad's watch and ran with it over to the table where the girls sat and showed it to Mom. Inside was a picture of Mom! And so she knew. I gather it was soon after that that they declared their feelings for each other. They used to meet on their days off and go for walks or to Cooney Island or to his parent's home in Bergenfield. I believe eventually she took him to meet her parents in Newark, but her parents - especially her Dad - were very displeased that she had joined this "cult" and then were doubly displeased that she was in love with a foreigner! Her mother tried to be the peacemaker, but it wasn't until children began arriving that her father eventually made peace with the fact that nothing was going to change.

On July 25, 1928, Grandpa Sven performed the ceremony that joined Mary Josephine Loeffler to their son, Hugo William Wiberg, in wedded matrimony. Grandma Mary Conrad Loeffler came to the ceremony but Grandpa Joseph Loeffler did not. I have Grandma Loeffler's wedding invitation and she underlined "Collection" three times! She must have been highly incensed that a collection for the Army would be taken up at a wedding, but it is my understanding that it was a natural thing to do at that time - at least in The Army.

Mom and Dad honeymooned in Canada and that was probably the last time until their retirement years that they were ever totally alone. From 1928 through 1964 (36 years) they had eight Corps in New England and eight children! They even had one Corps for a short time after they retired and also worked for The Army at their summer camp in Sharon, MA.

They were good and compassionate officers. I have heard many stories over the years about and from people they have helped. On the whole The Army was good to them too. But Mom relates one story that made me wonder. She wanted to buy Dad a Christmas gift shortly after they were married, so she asked him if she (instead of the janitor) could scrub the hall floor and get paid for it. He agreed, she did, and duly received the \$2.00 compensation. When the auditor came to check the books and saw that expenditure, he made Mom give the money back! She also at one time was going to be denied Salvation Army benefits after Dad died because she was only his spouse - even though she had gone through the same training and corps work that he had!

We, as their children, became their helpmates - sometimes willingly, more often not. I personally (as do many of my siblings) remember standing out on the kettles ringing a bell and my toes hurting so much from the cold that they actually burned when I came back inside. Although I never personally played a horn out on the kettles, some of my brothers did and I gather they lost a lot of skin from their lips when their lips froze to the mouthpiece. I remember collecting at a hockey game once and becoming so engrossed in the game that I forgot to collect. Can't remember who won, but I enjoyed the game and I was warm. I also remember selling War Crys from door to door at Christmas time another cold adventure.

In hindsight, one of the nicest places I worked as a teenager was at The Army's summer camp in Northfield, MA. My but it was beautiful there. I saw the Northern lights there for the first and only

time in my life. I also remember that someone played classical music over the loudspeaker and the music fanned out over the hill to the church and the field below. Awesome!

I am very proud of my Parents, Grandparents, and The Army. The Army gained a very good reputation during World War II and it has not diminished over time. And I am happy to correct people when they categorize The Army as a social service organization by telling them that it is first and foremost a religious organization that practices what William Booth (The founder of the SA) preached, i.e., “soup, soap, and salvation” in that order. In other words, feed them, clean them up, and then they will be receptive to listening to the word of God.

We, their eight children, have not strayed too far from the fold. Although none of us became officers and none of us go to The Army that I know of, once The Army is in your blood, it’s hard to get it out. Many of us married soldiers or officers’ children, many of us have Army friends, and we all (I think) like Army brass band music; four brothers and two nephews play in a brass band that is mainly composed of people who were brought up in The Army. As of this writing, we are all retired except the youngest. One brother died from complications of Alzheimer’s disease in 1999.

Compiled by
Mary Wiberg
Lotten’s Granddaughter
January 18, 2003