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# Meeting My Grandmother for the First Time

A collection of postcards shows her as a young woman

BY DIANE PINCUS OBER

One hundred and seven years after my Grandmother Julia Andersson left Öland, Sweden, and arrived in New York via Copenhagen on 13 Oct. 1909, I finally am getting to know her as a person.

My memories of her were of a kind person with a soft Swedish accent which I loved, and who had a story-book doll collection which she was so pleased to show me when I was a child. She was patient and loving and gave me her personal notebook when I was 12 years old. She said she had brought it from the “Old Country” but now she was living in her “New Country” and didn’t need this notebook anymore. Since all the writing was in Swedish, I put it in my sock drawer for safekeeping, where it became invisible because it was always there.

There is one entry where she writes:

*26 January 1910*

*Many strange things happen in this world, but that this little book should come with me to Amerika I never believed, especially when I received it. But what you least think will happen, happens.*

*Now I am sitting in Amerika and try (ing) to write. Wonder where I am next year at this time.....”*

For her, immigration was an adventure.

But she passed away when I was a teenager and before I had a chance to know her as a person. I still feel that loss.

After researching the Swedish church records, I did learn facts about her family in Sweden, and then I traveled to her childhood home on Öland, Sweden, where I saw the farmland her family worked. I walked in the home where she and her family lived. I saw the baptismal font in the church in Gräsgård where she was



*Julia as remembered by granddaughter Diane.*



*From left: brother Karl, half sister Elma, Julia, brother John.*

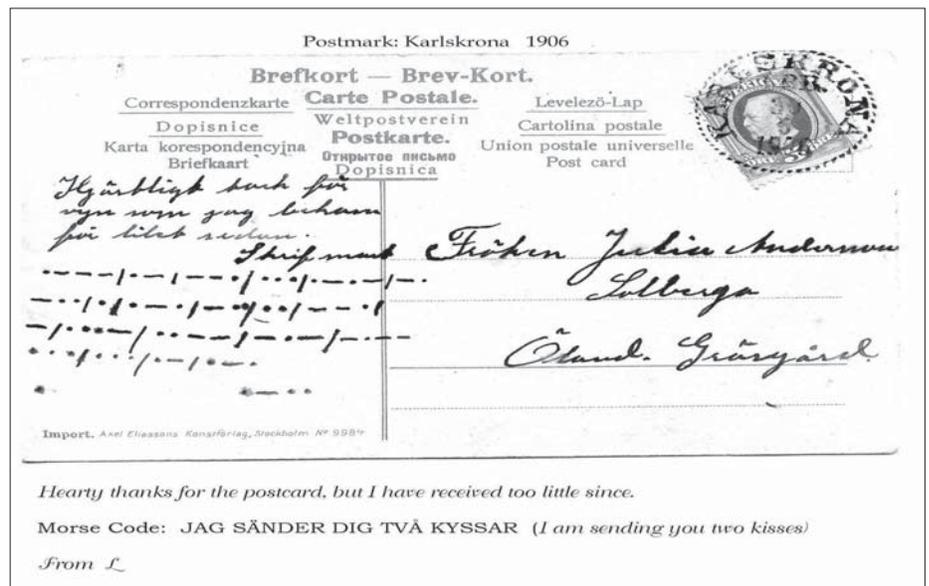
baptized. I walked on the shores of the Baltic Sea where she must have walked too.

I had a record of her life, but knew nothing about her as a person before she became my Grandmother.

Because we all save memorabilia as we go through life, I knew that she must have saved some letters and photos and I hoped that they still

existed. My hopes were dashed when I learned that all her papers and memorabilia were gone.

However, after my Aunt passed away, among her saved memorabilia were Grandmother Julia’s treasures that I was looking for 15 years earlier! So now, from photos, I know that my Grandmother was an adorable little girl, and a beautiful young



woman. From the postcards sent from Sweden saved in her scrapbook, I know she had many friends, a loving brother Carl, and even a secret admirer who wrote the following in Morse code:

*I am sending you two kisses”*

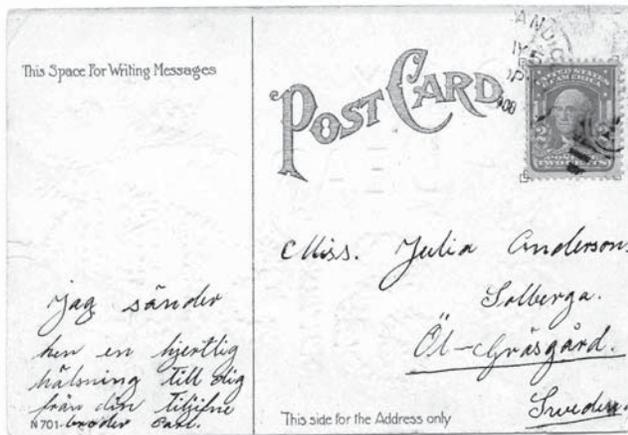
*From L, [see postcard on lefthand side!]*

As of now, I don't know who "L" is, but I have gotten over and around the well-known "brick walls" so I know it's possible to learn this in time.

My cousin kindly sent me photos and my Grandmother's scrapbook which show parts of my Grandmother's life before my time. I am so grateful for her generosity.



1908 Loveland, CO



To My Dear Sister,

I am sending here a hearty greeting to you from your devoted brother

Carl

Miss Julia Andersson  
Solberga  
Öland Gräsgård

Sweden



Gräsgård church was first built in the 1100s, but has been added to during the centuries.

Nearby is Eketorp fort from the Iron Age.

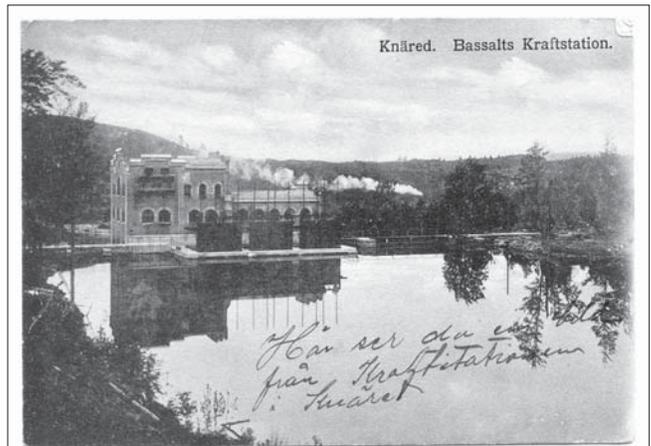


Photo: Knäred Bassalt Power Station. Here you see a picture from the power Station in Knäred



Dear Julia!  
Thank you for the letter which I received a while ago. Wondering how you are doing these days? Well, I hope. Myself, I am in excellent health.

Hearty greetings from Bertil

Postmark: Knäred 1 Oct 1910

Address:  
Miss Julia Andersson  
Dr. Ford  
Kerhonkson, N.Y.  
(crossed out:  
Mrs. Nelson, 204 National Ave  
Corona, L. I.)

### Additions:

Julia Adeline was born 29 Sep. 1888 at Solberga 5 in Gräsgård parish on the southern tip of the island of Öland, daughter to the homestead owner Anders Peter Petersson (b. 26 Feb. 1858 in Gräsgård) and his wife Hedvig Charlotta Andersson (b. 4 Feb. 1853 in Gräsgård). Hedvig had a daughter out-of-wedlock, Elma Maria Andersson (b. 16 Dec. 1877 in Gräsgård). Two older sons were also born; Karl Albert Paulinus Andersson (b. 6 Aug. 1885 in Solberga) and John Wiljam Alexis Andersson (b. 17 June 1887, also in Solberga).

Son Karl (Carl in the U.S.) left Sweden for the U.S. on 1 May 1905 and came to Loveland, CO. He returned to his parents on 4 Dec. 1912.

His brother John left Solberga on 7 March 1907 by the port of Malmö, and had a ticket for Loveland, but it is not known what happened to him.

Hedvig Charlotta Andersson died 30 Apr. 1928, and her husband Anders Peter Petersson on 31 Jan. 1939, both at Solberga.

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