

A few memories

Relatives and others through two centuries

from
"Man har ju lite minnen"
by
Charley Nilsson

Writing the history

I researched and wrote down the history of my family in two years. I started in January 2000 and finished on the day before Christmas Eve, 2001, by delivering the copies to around thirty relatives and friends in my home county of Skåne. It took my son Johan (who was the helpful driver) and myself a full day, but it was worth it to meet the people again and wishing them a Merry Christmas with a copy of the history, *Man har ju lite minnen (You've got a few memories)*. The day before I had mailed another twenty copies to other places in Sweden. I had promised myself to be done before Christmas, and I made it!

I interviewed around 50 people and spent over 100 hours at various archives. More than anybody else, my uncle Gustaf and my aunt Ester have been great sources of information as well as inspiration.

I had two very interesting, enjoyable – and now and then a bit frustrating – years. But for the most part it was great fun to research and write it, and truly a joy to meet a lot of people I'd never seen before, even didn't know of before, or hadn't seen since I was a child.

After the story was finished and printed (actually a family story never ends!) I had more information thanks to a distant relative I didn't know of before. Some of that information is written into the first chapter below.

Ever since I was in the middle of writing, my ambition has been to write a digested version in English, so that my American relatives can share at least some of the information I gathered. So here it is – enjoy!

Charley Nilsson
November 2002

Correction August 21, 2024:

On page 4, part 2 - 4 (Beckman was born on 1766....on the 30th of November, 1765) should be deleted and replaced as follows:

Hans Petter Beckman was born in 1766. His parents were shoemaker Christian Beckman (1739-1817) and his wife Anna Dorothea Cronbeck (1735-1797) in Skarhult. Hans Petter was the couple's sixth and youngest child.

Hans Petter followed in his father's footsteps and became shoemaker in Malmö in 1789. Six years later he moved to Ljungarörshus, a couple of kilometers southeast of the church in Norra Rörum.

Notes

Page 4 in *Minnen* shows a map of my home county Skåne with towns and villages that appears in the story. The photograph was taken by Ingemo, when we visited the remains of Tullskog, the small farm where my grandfather's mother and my father were born.

Page 6 is where you'll find the key names in the story, when and where the people were born and died.

Below, parts 1 to 4 are found on pages 7–9 in *Minnen* and is almost a complete English version of the original script. The following parts though are a digested version of what is found on the original pages as follows:

Parts 5 to 11 is from pages 9–18

Part 12 is from pages 33–42

Part 13 is from pages 71–74

Part 14 is from pages 75–77

Part 15 is from page 79–82

Part 16 is from pages 89–108

Part 17 is from page 119

Pages not mentioned above covers the story of my mother's or grandmother's ancestors. There are also in *På senare år (In later years)* short accounts on all my cousins and their offspring, as well as portraits of other people I interviewed in *Uppgiftslämnare (Informants)*.

A few words and expressions

For some of the Swedish words and expressions I haven't found any suitable English word(s). I have therefore used the Swedish word(s) but give you some explanations here:

Torp (*definite: torpet, definite plural: torpen*) was a small piece of land where the landowner allowed the user, **torparen**, to live on and farm the land. As payment **torparen** had to do a certain amount of days of manual labour for the landowner. Into the late 1800's this system provided for an essential part of the manual labour in agricultural Sweden.

Gatehusfolk were people living on someone else's land without farming the land or being employed by the land owner. Instead they tried to make ends meet by temporary jobs in farming or forestry. **Gatehus** is the name of the house they lived in.

When it comes to *family names* a man usually got this after his father's first name (Nils-son = the son of Nils). Girls also got their family name after their father, like in Nils-dotter (= Nils' daughter). If a mother was unmarried the child got her mother's family name. Another tradition is that people who had vocational training to be a smith, shoemaker, tailor etc. changed their given family name. This way my grandfather Nils took *Nilsson* as family name while his brother Oskar changed to *Nordin*. So, thanks to my grandfather Nils, my own name is Nilsson and not Magnusson! Yet another tradition is that men who became soldiers almost always got a new family name. These traditions started to change around the beginning of the 20th century, when children usually began to stick to their father's family name just like it commonly is today – or took a completely different family name, quite often connected with nature as f. ex. Ekblad (Leaf of oak) or Blomkvist (Sprig of flowers).

1. Hedvig Hansdotter – my father’s father’s father’s mother

On the 27th of September 1802 my grandfather’s grandmother, Hedvig Hansdotter, was born in the parish of Norra Rörum, north of Höör in the middle of the Swedish southernmost county, Skåne. Hedvig was the daughter of Kjerstina Eljarsdotter and her husband, *torparen* Hans Petter Beckman.

Beckman was born in 1766 and had – at least according to family tales – English lineage. An ancestor and admiral in the British navy is rumoured to have escaped from England some time in the 17th century and ended up in a small Scanian fishing port. This man is said to have been very rich, owing seventeen barrels of gold when in England. After coming to Scandinavia he went to Stockholm and became a hatmaker.

Hans Petter Beckman is said to have been a descendant to the ex-British naval officer, and had himself been a sergeant. Be that as it may, but the following is a matter of fact and not fiction!

Hans Petter’s grandfather was Pål Pärsson Beckman, who before he died in 1716 was a shoemaker in Perstorp and married to Ellina Pehrsson. Their son Hans Jacob Beckman was born in March 1709 and became a shoemaker like his father. Hans Jacob was married to Anna Petronella Axelia, born probably in 1721. Hans Jacob died in 1786 and her wife in 1794. Hans Jacob and Anna had seven children, the first one called Anna Catharina was born in 1748 and the last, Hans Petter, on the 30th of November, 1765.

When Hans Petter Beckman was 30 years old he married Kjerstina Eljarsdotter – who was a maid and six years younger than Beckman – on November 12, 1796, in the church of Norra Rörum. The couple settled as *gatebusfolk* in Askesholm by Ljungarörshus in the parish of Norra Rörum, where they during 1797–1823 had six daughters and one son.

A couple of years into the 1830’s Kjerstina got sick. When she died in 1838 Hans Petter still wasn’t left alone, as his oldest daughter Johanna stayed at Askesholm for a few more years. Beckman died on November 19, 1852, in the (for those days) high age of 86.

2. My grandfather’s grandfather Nils Olsson

Hedvig Hansdotter, daughter of Hans Petter Beckman and Kjerstina Eljarsdotter, was married on December 27, 1833. Her husband was Nils Olsson, who was born 1806 in Östra Strö east of Eslöv. Nils was the fifth child of woodworker Ola Nilsson and his wife Elna Trulsson.

After the wedding Nils and Hedvig moved to a *gatebus* in Toftaröd where they during the next thirteen years had five boys and a girl. The children all left home when they were very young, as many children had to do in those days as that was the only way for the family to support themselves. In 1884 Hedvig died. Her husband Nils had already in 1860, by the vicar, been considered very poor and crippled, but actually lived until he was 93 when he died of “old age”.

Nils’ and Hedvig’s oldest son Ola was somehow able to buy a small farm close to his parents. He stayed unmarried and lived his last years in an old folk’s home where he died in 1921, 86 years old.

Their second son, Jöns, was born in 1837 but died the year after. In 1841 another son was born and he also got the name Jöns (it was quite common for parents to give a child the same name as a child that had died), and seven years later Carl was born. When Carl was three years old both he and Jöns got a disease. Both boys died October 7, 1851 and were buried five days later.

Nils’ and Hedvig’s only daughter Johanna seemed luckily to have avoided serious sicknesses and grew up, got married and had a son.

3. Hanna Andersdotter and Nils Svensson

On Christmas Eve 1819 a girl was born in the parish of Tjörnarp. She was given the name Hanna Andersdotter and was to become my father's father's mother's mother. The girl's unmarried mother was Kjerstena Eskilsdotter, born in 1783. When Hanna was born Kjerstena worked as a maid at Åbarp, a farm outside Sösdala. She had already had the hard experience and shame of having a child out of wedlock when her son Eskil was born in 1820.

In the summer of 1820 Kjerstena Andersdotter died of typhoid fever, and the six months old Hanna and her ten year old half-brother Eskil became motherless.

I haven't been able to find out anything about Hanna's childhood, but most likely some relative took care of her and Eskil and then she started to work in her early teens. When she was in her twenties she was a maid on various farms outside Sösdala before she got employed by a farmer in Hjellaryd in the parish of Norra Rörum. On December 9, 1848, she married Nils Svensson, who was seven years younger than Hanna and a farmhand in the village of Toftaröd.

Nils Svensson was born in Hjellaryd on April 2, 1827. While his mother was the unmarried 18-year old maid Karna Nilsson, the identity of his father was not recorded.

Karna Nilsson was the illegitimate daughter of Elsa Pålsson, born 1768, and the farmhand Nils Tuesson. Elsa was a widow and had been living in a marriage of severe poverty. The life of Karna Nilsson is unknown to me, but her son Nils was after his birth in the care of his grandmother Elsa Pålsson. The very poor widow was soon forced to bring her grandson Nils to *fattighuset* (the house of the poor) in Norra Rörum, where Nils grew up living with his grandmother and the rest of the destitute people.

In the autumn of 1841 Elsa Pålsson died, 73 years old. Nils stayed in *fattighuset* a couple of more years, until he became seventeen and started working as a farmhand in Hjellaryd and places in that neighbourhood.

4. Had a block named after him

A couple of years after Nils Svensson and Hanna Andersdotter were married they settled at Tullskog, a small *torp* in the woods about four miles north-east of Höör. Tullskog would prove to be an important place in this family history.

Torpen could only provide for an insufficient base for the family's economy, so Nils Svensson also worked as a forester in the 1860's. He later became rather well known as a carpenter and house builder and was commonly called "Munken" (The Monk). Among the houses that he built was a house that later contained the bakery where my parents first met in the 1930's. The house was one of the biggest in Höör at that time and was called "Munkaborg" after the builder's nickname. Today Nils Svensson's nickname "Munken" still lives on as the name of the block. Next to Munkaborg Nils also built a simple chapel called Betel, that became a meeting place for people who for reasons of belief didn't feel at home in the more or less almighty (Lutheran) Church of Sweden.

In 1869 Nils bought a farm in Holma outside Höör and moved there with his family. Seven years later they moved to Åkersberg in Höör, where Nils had built houses for himself and others.

Six months after his wife Hanna died in May 1885, the 58 year old Nils married Maria Persson, a widow and sixteen years younger than Nils. For reasons unknown Nils and Maria in December 1888 moved all the way to Stockholm. In October 1896 Nils died of cancer and his widow Maria worked as a cleaning-woman in a part of Stockholm called Kungsholmen. After 1904 nothing is known about her.

Nils had no children with his second wife Maria, but his marriage to Hanna resulted in four girls and two boys during 1850–1864. As in other families came sicknesses and diseases that in those days often led to death. Their daughter Klara died when she was six, while Olander reached 16 and Eva 22.

Nils' and Hanna's daughter Petronella married the young tailor Magnus Andersson in 1875. They had four children before they decided to leave for America in 1888.

Petronella's brother Jonas learned carpentry and lived in Malmö before he came to Hörby in 1884 and married Ida Gyllstorp, daughter of a carpenter in Fulltofta. The young family seem to have been haunted by bad luck. Their twins Eva and Annika were born in 1885 and died the same day as they were born. Their son Gunnar was born in the spring of 1887 and died the year after, while Johan died in 1890 at the age of one year and four months. That year Jonas and Ida moved to Helsingborg, where the girls Ruth and Signe were born in the early 1890's. The girls were soon orphans, as Ida died in 1896 and Jonas in 1901.

Emelie was Nils Svensson's and Hanna Andersdotter's oldest child. When she was 21 she married the six years older Magnus Nilsson, my father's father's father.

5. Magnus and Emelie

Magnus Nilsson was born in 1844 in Toftaröd, Norra Rörum. When Magnus became a teenager he left his home and later came to know Nils' and Hanna's daughter Emelie. In October 1871 the worker Magnus moved into the home of Nils and Hanna and soon married Emelie. During the six years that Magnus and Emelie lived in Nils Svensson's house in Holma, their children Nils (my father's father), Carl, Sigrid and Oskar were born.

It is not known how Tullskog in Tollerup was used after Nils and Hanna moved to Holma, but probably they kept on farming the land at Tullskog even though they now lived in Holma (the distance is only a few kilometres).

In 1876 Nils Svensson and his family moved to a new house that Nils had built in Åkersberg, Höör, and the year after Magnus, Emelie and their four children moved to the place of Emelie's childhood, the *torp* Tullskog in Tollerup.

This was truly a home in "The Wildwood". Three rooms with a connecting stable, plain plank flooring and a thatched roof. There were no plumbing of any kind and all water was carried from an open well some distance from the house. It was a hard life with so many and so little. ... Many times the children went to bed hungry because there was no food in the house. Despite the hardship, however, mother has told me that she had a happy childhood. By the time she became a teenager things had become much better. (*Charles Bergman, 1978*)

Besides farming on the small *torp*, Magnus Nilsson also had some income from making clogs, a common way for people in Norra Rörum of supporting their often rather poor families. The clogs were made entirely of wood (alder) and not as it later became common with upper part made of leather. The making of clogs were mainly done during the winter when farming was low.

6. The Baptist of Höör

Betel, the chapel Nils Svensson had built first served as meeting place for a Lutheran group of people close to the Church of Sweden. Eventually they split into three parts in consequence with their beliefs, and after awhile the groups held their meetings at different times but still in Betel.

The dissenter law of 1860 allowed Swedish citizens to leave the Church of Sweden for any other church that had been accepted by the King. In 1890 one of the groups in Betel formed Höörs Baptistförsamling (The Baptist Church of Höör) and elected Magnus Nilsson, one of its founders, as its head. Magnus Nilsson would for the rest of his life be the leading person in the church and was commonly called "baptisten i Höör" (the Baptist of Höör).

The Baptists continued having their meetings at Betel. They eventually bought the property and called it Betelkapellet (The Betel Chapel), while the members of the other two groups moved to their own quarters and chapels. One night in 1934 Betelkapellet was destroyed in a fire, but already the year after the Baptist congregation had built a new church on Eriksgatan in Höör, where they in fact 34 years later were reunited with one of the other Christian groups.

One day in March 1887 – the same year as it no longer was possible for the Church of Sweden to by force fetch children to baptise them – Magnus Nilsson from Tullskog went to see the dean of the Church of Sweden in Höör. There he declared that the son he and Emelie just had been blessed with were to be called Enok Samuel. But there would be no baptism in the dean's church. Instead Magnus Nilsson stated that he intended to baptise the child by himself. Magnus probably intended, in consequence with his faith, to let Enok as well as later Joel and Ruth decide for themselves if and when they should be baptised.

Magnus and Emelie had in total eleven children during 1872–1895, among them Nils, my father's father. Their sons Carl Anton and Joel Efraim both lived only about a year, while their daughter Alma was to live until she was 87.

7. Died young

Magnus' and Emelie's fourth child, Oskar Nataniel, was born in 1876. When he was sixteen he moved to Helsingborg to learn to be a shoemaker. On Bruksgatan 24 in Helsingborg the 31 year old Johan Nilsson Frölich had his shoemaker's workshop. Frölich also had his home there where he lived with his wife Johanna and two sons. When Oskar moved into the house in November 1892 the household also contained two shoemaker journeymen, two maids and a hand. The next year Oskar was united there with his brother Hjalmar Wallentin, but Oskar moved on a couple of years later to Copenhagen, where he continued making shoes.

In the autumn of 1898 Oskar caught tuberculosis, at that time a common and fatal disease and the reason of death to ten per cent of the Swedes. When his father Magnus one day in December stepped out of his house in the woods north of Höör, he found someone sitting on the stairs. "Don't you recognise me, father?" asked Oskar, severely marked by the disease. Oskar had returned home to celebrate Christmas, but it became a sad celebration as Oskar died on Christmas Eve.

Child number nine, Enok Samuel, was born in 1887. Enok stayed with his parents in Tollerup and was probably sick for some years until he died in March 1909 from a tubercular inflammation in the lymph glands. Just like Oskar, Enok was only 22 when he died.

8. Alma and the lineman

When Magnus and Emelie's fifth child Alma was 22 she married Alfred Jönsson. Alfred was employed by the railway company and two years after their wedding the couple moved far up north in Sweden to Gällivare. At the end of 1878 they adopted a five month old girl called Ida, an orphan born in Malmö.

Alfred's work, mainly as a lineman, meant a lot of moving around. After seven years in various villages in northern Sweden the family moved to Halland, a county on the west coast and just north of Skåne. In 1939, after making their seventeenth move, the couple finally settled in Göteborg. Their beloved daughter Ida had unfortunately died in 1922, leaving Alma and Alfred without children.

Alfred died in 1952 after a myocardial infarct and Alma lived the rest of her life alone at Tredje Långgatan in Göteborg. Now and then she caught the southbound train to Skåne to visit her relatives. When she arrived at Billesholm I used to meet her at the station. Even in really warm weather the little old lady had her hat firmly on her head and a fox-fur and scarf tied all around her neck so you could hardly see anything but

her eyes. Dressed like that she walked the streets of Billesholm with her brother's son who only had shorts on.

Alma died in August 1956 and was buried at Oskar Fredrik's cemetery, in the same grave where earlier Alfred and Ida were laid to rest.

9. The shoemaker and the author

Hjalmar Wallentin, the sixth child of Magnus and Emelie, was born in January 1880. When he was thirteen years and three months old he travelled to Helsingborg where he was a trainee under the shoemaker Frölich. Wallentin lived with Frölich and his family, but often went to see uncle Jonas and his family. After four years as a trainee he got employment as shoemaker in Eslöv and later Hörby where he met his wife-to-be Christina Nilsson.

In 1905 Wallentin and Christina moved to Malmö where they started living together. Their first child, who they named Hjalmar, was born in the spring of 1906. Two years later they moved to Sösdala, where Hans-Gunnar, Dagny, Naemi, Renée and Disa were born, though only the last two within wedlock as Wallentin and Christina didn't get married until 1911.

Christina is said to have been a rather emotional woman, optimistic but stubborn, while her husband seems to have been a lot more joyful. While Wallentin made and mended shoes Christina developed her writing talent and got some ten books issued during 1906–1912 by two of the largest publishers in Sweden. The subjects of her books were mainly connected with life in the farmlands or small villages of her native county Skåne. Later in life she seemed to be more concerned with religious or Biblical subjects, though none of her writing from that later period were issued.

The family moved to Hurva in 1917 where their last child, Helmer was born in 1920. All of them, parents as well as children except the oldest son Hjalmar, would remain in the old shoemaker's house in Hurva for the rest of their lives. Of the children only Hjalmar had – as far as I know – a serious relation with the opposite sex and was married when he was 65. Therefore no offspring exists from Wallentin's and Christina's children.

Today the youngest daughter Disa lives alone in the same house that she and her family moved into when she was three months old. Disa is now 85 and an alert and sweet little lady with a humorous twinkle in her eye, who gladly and with great detail tell stories from days of old.

10. The emigrant

The life of Ida Bergman and her family has been well documented elsewhere. In 1978 her son Charles Bergman wrote his family's history in the papers *I remember* and *About mother*, both containing a lot of fascinating information that I used in *Man har ju lite minnen*. Regarding Ida and her offspring I therefore here confine myself to the following rather basic information.

Ida Albertina was born in 1884 and became the only one of Magnus' and Emelie's children who – just like the rest of the 30 000 Swedes who yearly left Sweden in the beginning of the 20th century – went looking for a future in America.

When school years were over Ida moved to Malmö, probably to work as a maid in some family. She learned to dance, something her strictly religious parents didn't approve of. She then worked as a maid in Höör, but in July 1902 she left home for The Promised Land. She seems to have managed alright in the States but made a shorter return to Sweden when her mother Emelie got sick and died.

Back in the States she married a German, Carl Leopold Bergman, who was born in Bad Salzuflen, around 50 miles south-west of Hannover. Carl and Ida settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1921 Ida, Carl and their eleven years old son Charles moved

to East Camden, New Jersey where they ran an ice cream parlour. Around two years later Ida got sick, a circumstance that forced her son to quit school to work in the family business, and her husband to combine working in the parlour with long hours in his old occupation, welding.

Ida died in July 1926, only 41 years old. Carl immediately sold the shop, moved to Philadelphia and somehow made it through the depression. He was able to retire in 1956 and died 90 years old in October 1975.

Carl's and Ida's son Charles married Kathryn Irene Prather in 1930. They soon moved to Runnemede, New Jersey and later lived in Pittsburgh and Titusville, Pennsylvania. Their two sons, Allan and Gerald, were born in 1937 and 1946 respectively.

In the 1960's Charles got interested in his roots. With great determination he started to learn Swedish and managed to renew his long gone contact with Sweden, a contact he had sporadically in the 1930's with his cousin Emil. As a result, Charles and Kathryn visited relatives in Sweden in 1967 and again a few years later. As my parents knew no language besides Swedish, I tried my best to keep in touch with our relatives overseas. Charles died in 1992 and when his widow became too weak to write, their son Alan wrote me with hopes that we could stay in touch.

And so we have, a fact that's been a great joy to my family in many ways. First our oldest son Pär visited Al and Nora in 1995, then my wife Ingemo and I had a wonderful stay with them the year after. Finally our youngest son Johan met his American relatives in 2002. We now also have, by the modern wonder e-mail, got in touch with Al's brother Jerry. So now we're only waiting and hoping to see some of them over here in Sweden!

11. The unmarried sisters of Betel

Magnus' and Emelie's oldest daughter Sigrid was born in 1875. After she left home she moved to Höör and later lived with her seven years younger sister Amanda. The sisters rented a two-rooms-and-a-kitchen flat in the same building as the old chapel Betel and worked as seamstresses in their flat. Their youngest sister Ruth was born in 1895. When Ruth was twenty years old she got employment in Höör as a maid, but when her employer died she joined her sisters at Betel where she also became a seamstress.

In 1934, on the night between July 6th and 7th Betel and surrounding buildings caught fire, but the sisters managed to get out of their flat in time. The fire had started around one o'clock in a garage. A carpenter who lived in a house close by noticed the fire and woke everybody up so no one got hurt.

When the Baptist congregation's new church was built the year after Ruth became its caretaker, a task that Sigrid as well as Amanda had before her. Ruth stayed unmarried just as her sisters, and Ruth and Sigrid also had one more thing in common as both had become hunchbacked.

Amanda and Sigrid died in 1940, but their sister Ruth lived for another fourteen years until she died from heart failure in August 1954.

12. The seamstress and the mason

My father's mother Amanda Andersson came from Mjölkalånga in the parish of Mäteröd some 25 kilometres north of Höör. Her mother Anna Nilsson had been employed by a schoolteacher as a maid and became an unmarried mother at 28 when her daughter Albertina was born. Five years later another daughter, Amanda, was also born out of wedlock. But Anna was married a year later to Anders Persson, the man who is commonly believed to have been Amanda's father. Later also the girls Emma, Klara and Hilda were born.

One winter when she was a teenager Amanda played on the ice, fell and badly hurt her hip. In those days the only thing to do was to stay in bed until one had healed. After more than a year in bed Amanda was able to stand up and walk, but she was limp for the rest of her life.

When school years were over Amanda came to Sösdala where she started sewing trousers and vests for a tailor named Otto Hörlin. While in Sösdala she met Magnus' and Emelie's son Nils, who at that time had become a mason. After being baptised according to Baptist ritual Amanda was welcome to marry Nils, and so they did on September 7, 1906.

After living in Sösdala for a couple of years Nils and Amanda and their two children Emil and Ester – who had been born in 1907 and 1910 respectively – moved to Nils' childhood home of Tullskog to live with Nils' father Magnus, who had become a widower in 1907.

In November 1914 Magnus died from peritonitis. He was buried on December 3 with lots of friends and church members in attendance. From what was written in the Baptist journal he seems to have been a very well-respected, loyal and warm hearted man who was the head of the Baptist congregation in Höör from its beginning in 1890 until he died, 70 years old.

At Tullskog two more children were born, Gustaf in 1913 and finally in July 1915, my father Hugo. As most people in those days the family were rather poor, though Nils' skills as a mason and house builder brought good money into the household. They also supported themselves by whatever their small fields – which they plowed with the help their only horse – and their two cows, their pigs and hens could give them.

During most of the year Nils was away from home building houses and so Amanda was responsible for all the work at home. This meant that the children had to do a lot of work in the fields as well as in the house. When time for school came, there were no transportation except for their own legs. Their first school was less than a mile from home, but when they got a little older they had to walk six kilometres (about 4 miles) each day to their school in Höör, and then back home again through the woods. After school they did their home work and then carried food and water for the cows and pigs or did other chores.

Nils died in January 1930. With her youngest children ready to leave home, Amanda had to leave Tullskog. After a few years outside in Holma she moved into Höör to spend the rest of her life in a small house at Trädgårdsgatan, next door to the place where the old chapel Betel had been. My grandmother Amanda died in January 1960 while making her usual Christmas visit in our home in Billesholm. She was buried in Höör, in the same grave where her husband Nils was laid to rest thirty years earlier.

13. Emil and Ruth

Nils and Amanda Nilsson's oldest son Emil left home right after school to work as a farmhand. After a few years he worked for a farmer in Maglasäte close to Höör, and it was probably there he had an accident which led to the removal of one of his kidneys.

After his employment in a lumber yard Emil started selling fish. During most of the war years he loaded as much fish as he could on his motorcycle and went around selling his fish in the neighbourhood of Höör as well as doing his business in the village on market days.

In the mid-thirties Emil had met Ruth Lindau-Rosengren and she and Emil got married in May 1937. The couple first lived in Höör where their children Linnea, Bertil and Carin were born. Emil supported his growing family as fishmonger, but wanted to expand his business and around 1944 he bought a fish shop in Malmö, where he moved with his family.

The fish business didn't go to well after the war, so Emil sold the shop. After other employments he came to a furniture store where he stayed until he retired in 1973. In the meantime the family had grown with Christina, Ann-Marie, Ulla, Kjell-Arne and Hans-Göran, so while Emil tried to make ends meet for his wife and eight children Ruth took care of their big family at home, a flat in a working-class neighbourhood in Malmö.

Both Emil and Ruth were active members of the Baptist church in Malmö, where Emil played violin and sang in a music group. He was also a member of an Esperanto-club and had, at least when he was younger, travelled around a bit in Europe staying with people he got in touch with through Esperanto.

Emil was 66 when he retired, but had trouble with diabetes and died in July 1975. His widow Ruth had for many years had bad eyes and also got senile, so when Emil died she couldn't take care of finances and other matters. After spending some time in a hospital she died in December 1988.

14. Ester

When Emil's sister Ester was fifteen she became a housemaid in an upper-class family in Lund. But Ester's intention was to be a nurse in a hospital. After working in the hospital kitchen of Lund she got employed by the mental hospital Sankt Lars in Lund. There she got a good education and ended up being the head of one of the departments in 1948, a position she kept until she retired in 1969.

Throughout the years Ester has stayed an unmarried but very powerful and active woman. For many years she held many assignments for the Baptist organisation in Sweden, often as the only woman in male-dominated boards.

When Ester retired she fulfilled an old dream when she went to Africa to visit missionaries and Baptist hospitals. In 1971 she went back to Africa for voluntary work at the Baptist hospital in Boshwe, Belgian Congo, where she stayed for two years.

Ester now lives in an old people's home outside Lund, where she has a small but very nice little flat. Her back has been bothering her for many years and her eyes are rather bad these days. But Ester, a true optimist and fighter, still gets around by bus or train to visit friends or participate in Sunday services at her grandfather's church in Höör.

15. Gustaf and Maja

When Gustaf, Nils' and Amanda's third child, was 25 years old he married Maja Olsson in November 1938. Maja was the daughter of a pharmacist named Per Olsson and his wife Sigrid, who had a paint and chemical shop by the railroad station in Höör.

Two years earlier Gustaf had been employed by the Swedish postal service and went to Stockholm for education. In those days you had to know every railway station and post office in Sweden. In 1937 Gustaf moved to Malmö where after the wedding Maja joined him.

For some years Gustaf travelled a lot, as the mail was distributed by train and assorted at night as the train moved from place to place. He was then stationed at the main post office in Malmö and was later appointed to be foreman for the parcel division. When automation of parcels was to be implemented at the end of the fifties Gustaf became the first foreman in that division, an assignment he kept until 1968 when he got a higher supervising position.

Starting in 1940 with their firstborn Åke, Gustaf and Maja had a family of five children, with Agneta and Ingegerd born in 1944 and 1946, and the twins Berit and Anders born in 1950. They managed to make ends meet, though they had rather lean years until the children grew older. Besides his job at the postal services Gustaf had other part-time jobs to support his family, while Maja took care of their home.

When Gustaf retired in 1978 he and Maja moved into a flat upstairs in the Baptist church's building in Höör. After being hit by stroke Maja died in June 2001. Gustaf starts to feel his age, as he says, but seems alert and is always in a good mood, though he misses his wife Maja a lot.

16. Hugo and Ella

My parents Hugo and Ella got acquainted in Höör, in a bakery close to where Hugo's mother Amanda lived and where Hugo was a young baker and Ella sold bread and cakes in the shop. Hugo had always had in mind to become a baker and had started as an errand boy and trainee in 1932.

Ella, child of a mason just like Hugo, had first come to Höör from his native Billesholm in 1925 to take care of a cousin's children. After returning to Billesholm she came to Höör and the bakery in 1937.

Hugo and Ella married in 1938, and in August 1939, just before the start of World War II, their son Lennart was born. The war years were at first rather tough as Hugo lost the job in the bakery, but he managed to get by on other jobs until he had the opportunity to start his own bakery in Bjuv in 1942. After renting the bakery shop and the adjacent house for a year he managed to buy the property in August 1943, a big and adventurous step for a man with his simple background.

The young couple struggled through the war years and in 1947 the family grew as another son was born, i. e. myself. The bakery business also slowly grew as Hugo was able to buy a car to distribute the bread in the area, and later in the forties he also had one or two employees. In the early fifties Hugo started to look for another and bigger bakery, and in Billesholm, where Ella's parents lived and just a few miles from Bjuv, he bought a property with better possibilities of improving his business. In November 1953 we all moved to this huge house – at least that was as my six year old eyes saw it – in the middle of this coal mining village.

In Billesholm five bakers worked beside my father and mother, one or two women took care of the bakery shop and they also soon had three delivery men employed for distribution in a rather wide area. Hugo had always been ahead of his time when it came to automation and also made further investments in machinery to make the baking process more efficient.

In July 1958 my parents took another step regarding their business when they bought Dahlins Bageri, a very well-respected bakery in one of the main shopping streets in Helsingborg. For a while Hugo owned both Dahlins and the bakery in Billesholm, but after a few years he found it necessary to concentrate his efforts to Helsingborg. In February 1962 he closed operation in Billesholm and we all moved to Helsingborg, where my parents bought a small house on the east edge of town. The week before we moved my brother Lennart married Vanja Andersson, and they started living together in a flat in Helsingborg.

Unfortunately it took Hugo a year to sell the property in Billesholm, a fact that was a problem financially. But the bakery in Helsingborg was doing good business, and for a while all seemed well. But more trouble was to follow. The owner of the house where Hugo rented space for the bakery wanted to do something else with the property, and didn't renew Hugo's contract. In the summer of 1965 the last bread was sold in my parents' bakery. The machines and other things that Hugo owned was sold or given away. Hugo and I (who had finished school in 1964) worked for a baker who bought some machines from my father, and then Hugo had no problems getting other jobs. Unfortunately he lost money in the process of winding up his business, and so my parents had a couple of very tough years before things got straightened out.

In 1982 Hugo retired, and he and Ella had at least a couple of fine and trouble-free years together. They could travel around by car and were also very active in the Baptist church in Helsingborg. But it took but a few more years until Hugo started getting se-

nile. In 1988 Ella – who for many years had a bad leg and trouble moving around – fell and once more broke her leg. As Hugo's senility by then had become worse we realised that Ella could no longer be able to take care of him.

While Ella was recovering Hugo was placed in a home for old and senile, Lennart and I sold their house and got a flat for Ella in central Helsingborg, close to my job. Hugo died in 1994 and Ella in February 1997.

17. Me and my brother

After finishing school my brother Lennart first worked for my parents as bread distributor. During 1961–1972 he was a driving instructor and after that bus driver for a few years. Since 1975 he is stage manager for the symphony orchestra of Helsingborg, getting all things in order before concerts as well as while on tour carrying instruments and other equipment around. This way he has travelled not only around Scandinavia but also to places like Spain, Germany and United States.

In 1962 Lennart married Vanja Andersson, a farmer's daughter and clerk. They live in Helsingborg and in the 1970's they adopted two children from India, Ingela and Tomas. Ingela is a schoolteacher and married, while Tomas works at a medicine company and is living with his girlfriend Veronica.

After making cakes and cookies for about a year after school I worked at a wholesale business. In 1974 I got employed by the Police in Helsingborg as photographer. For twenty years I worked there mostly as photographer, but I had also quite a few trade union assignments on both local, regional and national levels. From 1995 on I've been handling the external and internal information of our Police District, spending most of my time talking or writing to news media regarding various crimes and accidents.

While doing my national military service around 1968 I met Ingemo Larsson, a carpenter's daughter from the county of Blekinge. Ingemo have been working all her life with retarded children. We got married in 1971 and our sons Pär and Johan were born in 1975 and 1978 respectively. Both of them will hopefully finish their Master of Arts examination on IT-related subjects before the summer of 2003.