

# Part 1. Three Generations. Lars and Lisa (Gustafsdotter) Larsson, Children and Grandchildren.

## Introduction

Lars and Lisa (Gustafsdotter) Larsson were born in Sweden in 1827 and 1830, respectively.<sup>1,2</sup> Both were children of farm workers, known in Sweden as crofters. Lars was born at Tällered croft in Alster parish and Lisa was born at Nordsjö croft in Nedre Ullerud parish. Both parishes are in Värmland province (or county); a map showing the parishes of Värmland is found in the Appendix of this book. Lars and Lisa were married in 1851 in the Nedre Ullerud parish church (shown in a photograph on the title page; the Alster parish church is shown in Figure 1<sup>2</sup>) and, consistent with the times, proceeded to raise a large family. Eleven of twelve children born to the couple between 1851 and 1875 lived to adulthood. While raising their family, Lars and Lisa moved several times from one croft to another. Their first child was born at Häberg croft, their second and third children were born at Mosserud croft, and the remaining children were born at Carlsberg (later known as Rosendal) croft. All three crofts are located in Nedre Ullerud parish, Värmland.<sup>1</sup>

A crofter, or *torpare*, has been described as follows:<sup>3</sup>

“In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish population grew explosively, due in part to the introduction of the cowpox vaccine, which drastically reduced infant mortality... . As the families grew, the farms, which had been in the same family, perhaps for centuries, suddenly were no longer able to feed the many additional mouths. Add to this the fact that the nation’s laws precluded, that at the death of the farm owner, the farm could be carved up for the heirs. Usually the farm was therefore inherited by the eldest son. The remaining children had to make their own way, either by hiring out as farm hands and maid servants to a neighboring farmer, joining the army, or taking up a village trade such as that of a cobbler, a tailor or a carpenter.

“For those who wished to remain on the land and at the same time to stay, at least semi-independent, there was one other choice, that of establishing one’s own existence on land which belonged to a farm owner. This land, usually the most unproductive, was quite often located on the outskirts of the village near the edge of the forest. This was of course encumbered land, and the settler who worked it was obligated to provide the owner with a certain number of free workdays during the year. In return the *torpare* worked his plot of ground, seldom larger than a couple of acres, where he could plant potatoes, grow vegetables and a bit of hay for the lone cow, a couple of pigs and a few chickens....

“The social conditions under which the *torpare* worked varied greatly from farm to farm, from village to village. Where the farm owner and his crofter worked together harmoniously, life was tolerable at least. Where the owner and his farm laborer could not agree, or where the farm owner made unreasonable demands, which the crofter could scarcely meet, life could be frustrating, humiliating and miserable. This state of affairs has been amply illustrated in Vilhelm Moberg’s “The Emigrants.” These conditions were of course one of the prime motivating factors for Swedes to emigrate to America.”

Other accounts of rural Sweden in the 1800s describe crofters in terms ranging from those similar to the above to those of small landowners.<sup>4</sup> Although we do not know exactly the status of Lars and Lisa Larson, the fact that the family moved between several crofts and that all the male children emigrated from Sweden to the U.S. suggests that they were not property owners.

The eleven surviving children of Lars and Lisa, the croft at which they were born, the years of their birth and death, the year of their emigration from Sweden, and the number of their children is summarized as follows:

Name	Croft where born	Lifespan	Emigration, date	No. of children (no. surviving to adulthood)
Lars Gustaf	Håberg	1851-1923	2 Jul 1884	6 (3)
Maria Lena	Mosserud	1853-1943	-	7 (7)
Carolina	Mosserud	1856-1883	-	2 (0)
Sophia	Carlsberg <sup>a</sup>	1858-1918	19 Jun 1891	0
Johan August <sup>b</sup>	Carlsberg	1860-1907	1876-1880	0
Anna Lisa	Carlsberg	1862-1904	7 Jul 1884	2 (2)
Otto	Carlsberg	1864-1924	4 Jun 1891	7 (7)
Adolf	Carlsberg	1866-1948	~1886	0
Emma	Rosendal	1869-1945	18 Feb 1893	4 (3)
Elvina	Rosendal	1869-1910	10 Jul 1889	0
Oscar	Rosendal	1875-1961	18 Feb 1893	0

<sup>a</sup>The name of Carlsberg croft later was changed to Rosendal croft. <sup>b</sup>Also known as Charles Smith.

Lars died at Rosendal in 1882 but even before his death, one son (Johan August) had left Sweden for the New World. After his death, family members departed for the U.S. at intervals over the next ten years. Lisa remained in Sweden until her youngest child reached age 18 and then in 1893 she, too, joined the migration to North America. At that time, only eldest daughter, Maria Lena, whose family was already established, remained in Sweden (Carolina died in Sweden in 1883). A family history, centered around the life of Otto Larson, has been written by Jean Larson and includes data used in the above table.<sup>1</sup> A brief history of Emma Larson has also been recorded.<sup>5</sup>



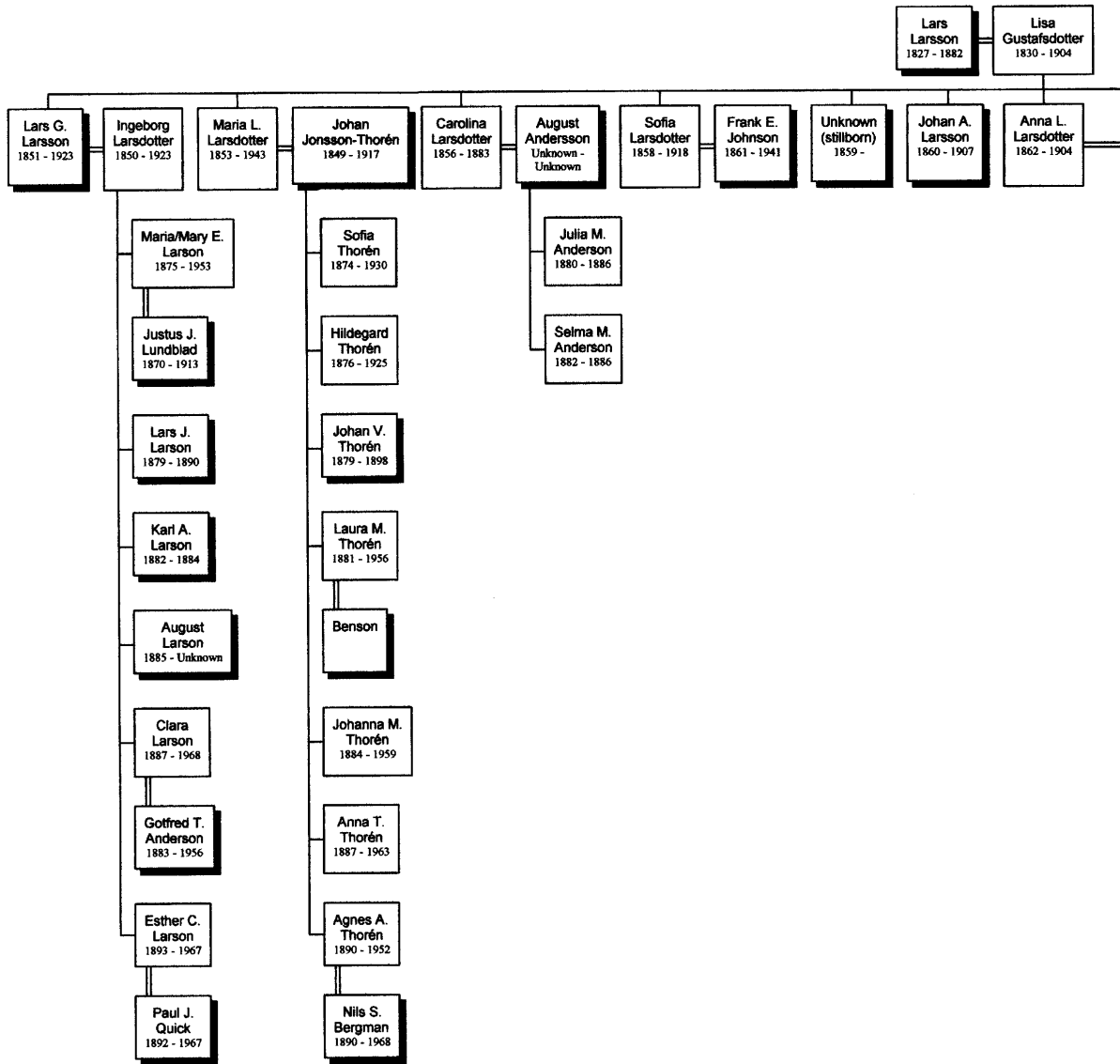
Figure 1. Alster parish church, 2002

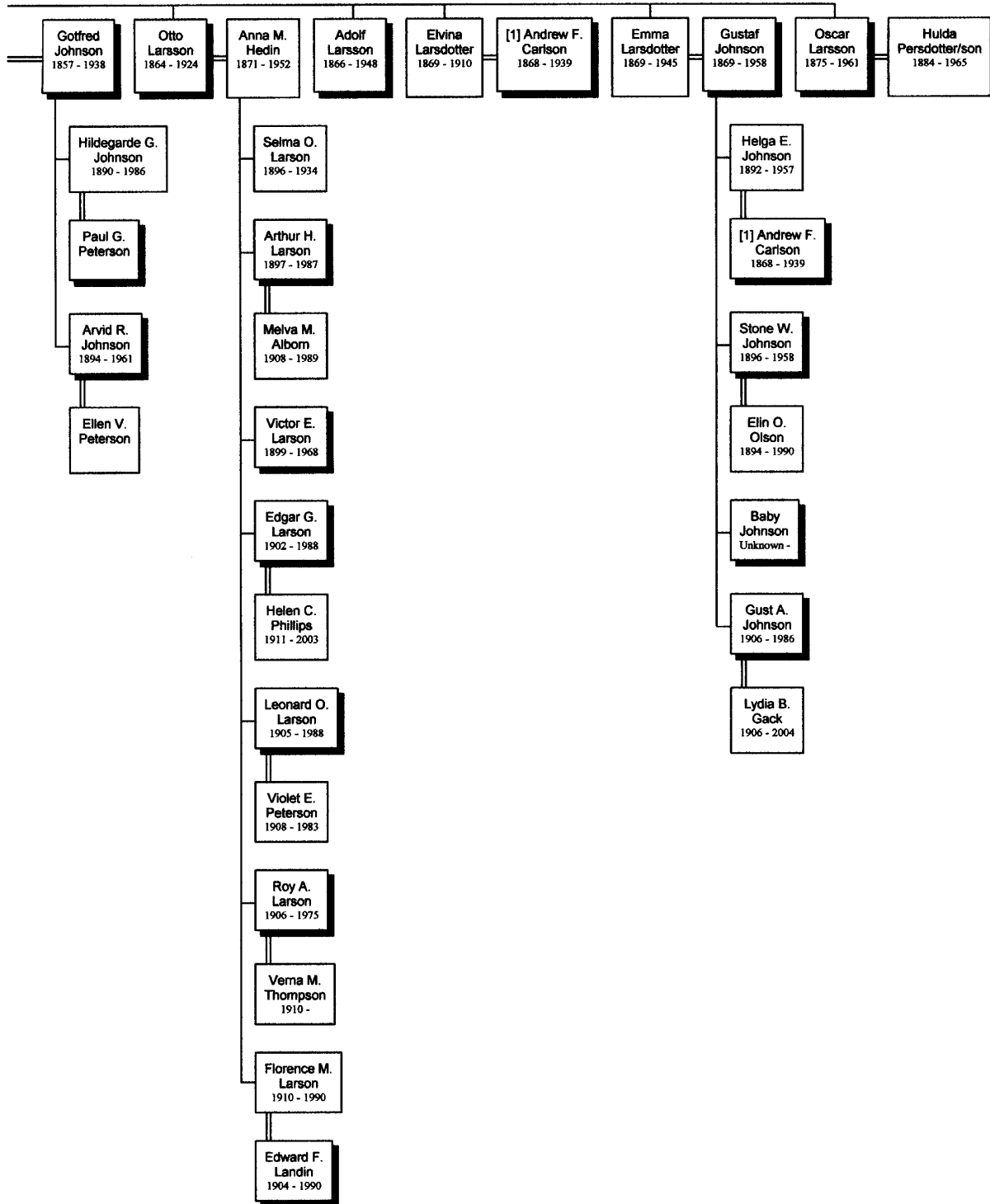
Because photographs are a central element of this account, the invention and development of photography occurring coincidentally with the lives of Lars and Lisa was a crucial event. In 1827, the same year that Lars was born, a Frenchman, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, created the first permanent photographic image.<sup>6,7</sup> Following this, the Daguerreotype was introduced in 1837 and was used into the 1850s until it was superseded by the so-called calotype of William Talbot. The ferrotype, or tintype, was introduced in 1853 and became popular after 1860; the process remained in use until after the Second World War. Small photographs on paper of about four inches by two and a half inches, known as ‘carte de viste’ and mounted on heavy cardboard displaying the name, etc., of the photographer, also became popular after 1860. A larger version, the ‘cabinet’ photograph, about four by five and a half inches in size, also became popular.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, by the time the children of Lars and Lisa reached adulthood and joined the working class in Sweden, photography was sufficiently affordable to allow them to sit for and buy photographic images of themselves.

As noted in the Preface, photographs portraying many members of the Larson family dating back to the late 1800s are still in existence. These photographs together with brief biographical sketches are used in Part 1, Figures 1-67, to illustrate three generations of the Larson family beginning with Lars and Lisa Larsson. Lars and Lisa are given the first entry, followed by entries for their children in chronological order of birth. Entries for Lars and Lisa’s grandchildren (the third generation) are integrated with their parent’s listings. Thus, for example, the entry for Lars Gustaf and Ingeborg Larson includes entries for their children. Additional photos are collected in Part 2, Figures 74-124. A complete list of photographs included in this book is given in Part 3. A descendent chart for Lars and Lisa Larson showing their children and grandchildren is shown on pages 4 and 5.

Please note that the spellings Larsson and Larson are used interchangeably for some persons. Larsson is the traditional Scandinavian spelling used with the patronymic naming system while Larson is the spelling used in the United States.

Descendent chart for Lars and Lisa Larsson.





## Lars Larsson (1827-1882)

The patriarch of this account is Lars Larsson although, ironically, there is no photograph in which he has been identified with certainty (see Part 2, Figure 74 and the accompanying discussion for a photograph that has been considered to be of Lars). Lars was a torpare, or crofter, born 2 Jan 1827<sup>8</sup> (or 31 Oct 1827<sup>9,10</sup>) at Tällered croft in Alster Parish (see map in Appendix), Värmland, Sweden, and



Figure 2. Detail from portrait of Lisa (Gustafsdotter) Larsson



Figure 3. Lisa (Gustafsdotter) Larsson

and was the son of Lars and Lena (Larsdotter) Larsson.<sup>11</sup> His ancestral genealogy, as compiled by Jean Larson, goes back six generations to Olof Mansson in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. A genealogical ancestor report showing all ancestors from Lars back to Olof is included in Part 4 of this book.

Lars married Lisa [(E)Lisabeth]<sup>1</sup> Gustafsdotter on 3 Mar 1851 in the Nedre Ullerud parish church. A photograph of the parish church is reproduced on the title page of this book.<sup>2</sup> The first church to be built at this site dated to the middle ages. A larger church building of wood was erected in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The present church was built in 1759.<sup>12</sup> The current church in Alster parish, the birthplace of Lars, is shown in Figure 1. This building dates to 1693-1695 when it replaced a medieval church on the same site.<sup>12</sup>

Lisa is seen in Figures 2-4 in portraits taken in St. Paul, Minnesota, after her immigration to the United States. She was one of seven children of Gustaf Olsson and Maria Lisa Nyström<sup>2</sup> and was born 7 Aug 1830<sup>8</sup> (or 17 Dec 1830<sup>9,10</sup>; 6 Jul 1830<sup>2</sup>) at Nordsjö croft in Nedre Ullerud parish in the

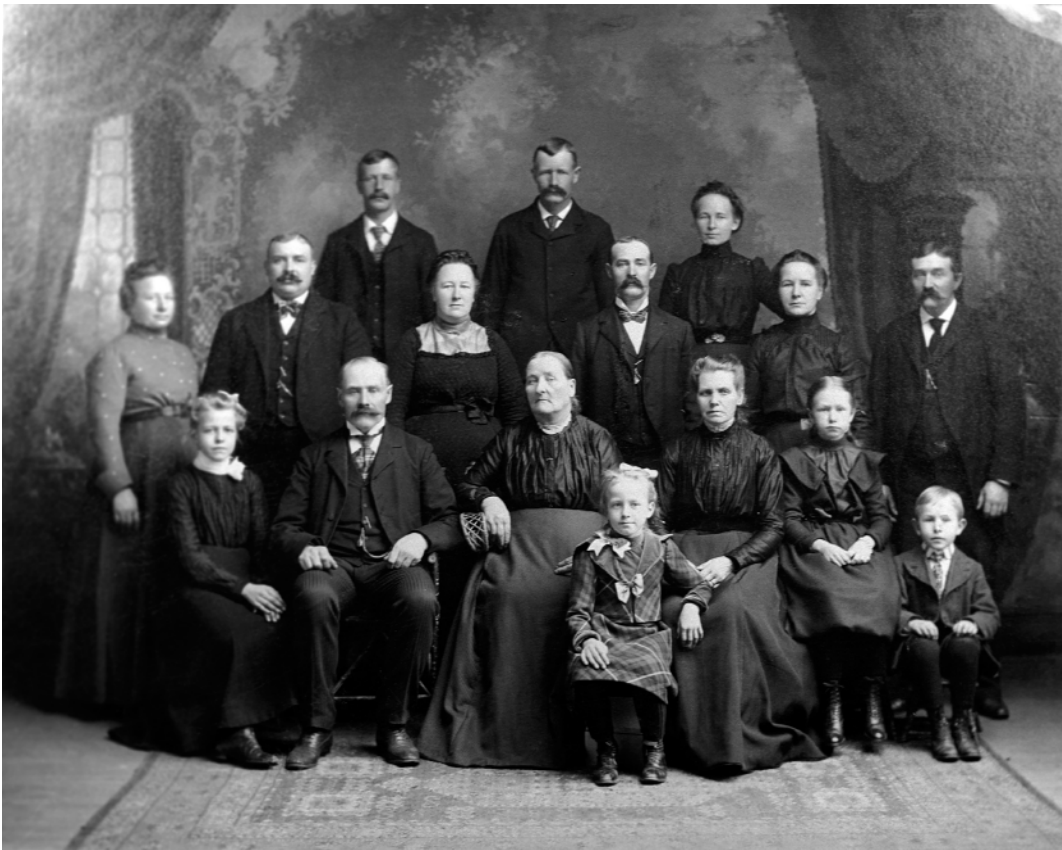


Figure 4. Larson family photograph, about 1902; l. to r., child seated in front: Esther Christine Larson; first row, seated: Clara Larson, Lars Gustaf Larson, Lisa (Gustafsdotter) Larson, Ingeborg (Larsdotter) Larson, Hildegard Gladys Johnson, Arvid Rudolph Johnson; second row, standing: Elvina (Larsdotter) Carlson, Andrew Carlson, Sophia (Larsdotter) Johnson, Frank E. Johnson, Anna Lisa (Larsdotter) Johnson, Gotfred Johnson; third row, standing: Oscar Larson, Adolf Larson, Emma (Larsdotter) Johnson. The four Larson siblings not in the photograph were Maria Lena and Carolina (who died in 1883), both of whom remained in Sweden, and Johan August and Otto, both of whom were located in Colorado at the time this photograph was taken.

province of Värmland. Her ancestral genealogy also is given in Part 4. The identity of Lisa's maternal grandparents and great-grandparents is corrected<sup>2</sup> from earlier versions<sup>1,5</sup> of her genealogy.

Lars died at Rosendal on 3 Jan 1882<sup>8,9</sup> at the age of 55. Then, as Jean Larson writes: "In November, 1885, Lisa took Elvina, Oscar, and (officially at least) Adolf from Rosendal to Risäter (Birchstick Cabin), a settlement across the Klar river and a bit downstream from the parish church. By this time, 16-year-old Emma was 'on her own.'" Although Emma was on her own, the move of her mother to Risäter likely brought her into proximity with her future husband, Gustaf Jansson/Johnson. This was because Risäter<sup>13</sup> also was the home of the Jan Andersson family whose youngest son was Gustaf Jansson. Although Jan Andersson had died in 1877, members of his family lived at Risäter at least until 1900.<sup>8</sup>

By 1893, seven of Lisa's living children had immigrated to the United States. Therefore, when Emma (now Johnson) and Oscar emigrated from Sweden to Minnesota in 1893, Lisa joined them and lived thereafter in St. Paul with daughter, Anna Lisa. This last emigration brought to nine the