

The history of Hannah Haslingden and her family

written by her daughter
Julia Haslingden

some time after 1896

In the year 1839 there lived in Liverpool a captain James Haslingden and his wife Marianna and their son James, 15 years old.

On the 15th of October this year the family was increased with twins, a boy and a girl. The little baby boy died but the girl lived and got the name Hannah. She was a very delicate baby. However she lived and at 5 years she lost her father who was killed by accident on board his own ship. Leaning against the rail he was watching the crew unloading his ship when a great block was let loose and swinging over the ship hit his head. He just turned round towards the rail and when they came up to him he was dead. A couple of years later her mother died and Hannah was sent to her grandparents in Dublin where she attended a Catholic school. At fifteen years of age she had lost her grandparents and was again alone in the world except for her brother, but he was far away on the other side of the globe. He was now about thirty years old, married and the captain of a ship belonging to Melbourne. He had his family sailing along with him but after receiving the news about his grandparents' death he made arrangements for going to fetch his sister from Dublin and bring her along with him on board the ship.

When expecting their captain's return the ship's crew gathered on deck to welcome him and to have a good look at the young girl he brought on board. The two mates stood close together where they could have a good view of everything. After a scrutinising look one of the mates said to his friend "that one or no one". – The speaker was a Swede called Augustinus Forsström. The other mate was a German and was just as fascinated at the sight of the young girl but kept it to himself saying: "Oh she is the captain's sister and not for us". His name was captain Francis Sprengle. –

Five years passed and they sailed about the world everywhere except America. Of course the young couple found many an opportunity to make acquaintance and in time they found out that they loved each other and wanted to get married. However when they brought their case before her brother he was of another opinion altogether. As an Englishman of those times he could not agree to let his sister marry a foreigner. No, no it was quite impossible! –

At last the young couple decided to leave the ship and return to England and so they did.

After having left her brother and his family mother never heard anything of or from him or his family.

Both my brother August and captain Sprengle sailed many years in those parts of the world and they made inquiry everywhere, but in vain. Nobody knew or had heard anything about the captain and the ship. The general opinion was that the ship must have gone down with all the people on board.

Captain Sprengle said about uncle James that he was the best looking man he had ever met.

Well, the young couple landed in England at the Tyne, married and settled down in North Shields and here my brother Augustinus Reinhold was born 1862 9/2. Queer to say he got both his own father's and his stepfather's names. Later on they moved to South Shields, the nicest of the two towns with the same names.

Here I was born 1864 31/8 and called Julia Hannah.

Even captain Sprengle came to England, married and made his home close to where we lived in South Shields. He was just in time to become my godfather.

My father was at sea when I was born but came home to spend Xmas with his family and of course was very pleased to see they had got "önskebarn". But Xmas passed and he had to be off again for a trip in the Mediterranean. They were bound for Alexandria but met with a terrible storm just outside. The ship was lost and the crew had to take the boats. The boat my father was in capsized and he was the only one lost. He was unable to swim otherwise he would have been saved. Later on they found his dead body and buried it in Alexandria.

I have a little note sent to my mother by the captain of the ship "Ellen" telling her about this awful news.

When this sad message had reached our relatives in Sweden, they wanted mother to bring her little ones and come over to see them all here. At this time my grandmother was a widow living in Söderhamn. David, the youngest, was at home finishing his school. Fredrik, Gustav and Johan were at sea, Reinhold a merchant and Julia a school mistress in Gefle. Anna was studying to learn a higher grade in Stockholm for school.

After father's death there were only seven children left of the eleven they had had.

Now it happened that one of my uncles was a mate on a Swedish ship trading on England and they came to Sunderland. When the captain whose name was Trapp heard about mother and the family's wish to see her in Sweden, he offered to bring her over. He also offered his cabin at our disposal for the journey. So mother consented and broke up her little home and set out with her little ones for a visit to a strange country but had no intention to leave England forever.

She was first taken to Söderhamn and then to Gefle, where Julia was teaching in her school, Reinhold busy in his shop and Gustav had his home and family. Here we had an old grandaunt whose husband captain Hedkvist was dead. Their only child, Edla, was very frail. It was said that she had been in love with a gentleman her mother did not like and would not let her marry. This was said to be the reason Edla was so frail. She did not live long after our arrival here. She had been teaching in a school for girls and I suppose it was English she taught as she spoke and read it well. I have a very lovely memory of her.

Mother had taught us some English prayers we used to say morning and evening. Now aunt Edla taught us the beautiful 23 Ps. and I love it and often repeat it thinking of her who taught me to read it. She was a very nice and amiable companion for mother until she got acquainted with the language and the customs in Sweden.

Aunty Hedkvist had a nice two storied house. The second floor was let to a family von Post, but the ground floor was occupied by herself and her daughter. Now she offered mother to rent a nice big room and promised her to use auntie's big kitchen.

At that time there were lots of english people and english speaking Swedes in Gefle. At Strömsbro Mr Claughton and his family, he was engaged at the manufactory there. – A young batchelor Mr Alexander Kerr at "gasverket". He had a nice young lady from England to visit him. From him I received a big beautiful doll one Xmas and an other time I got a pretty golden locket with his photograph.– So there was a Mr Keen and his family, a daughter called Elisabeth. I think he had something to do with the railway. – A Swedish lady, Mrs Lundberg, had been companion with Jenny Lind in England. Her husband was a merchant in Kingstreet close by Aunty Julia's school. They had a big house and many rooms, four or five children a great deal older than me. Especially at Xmas time we had many nice and jolly days with them. Yes, mother had a good many interesting acquaintances. She also got a great many pupils who wanted to learn English and two schools for girls as well. When old enough I attended one of those schools. Ms Clara Lind taught the pupils English herself then and often used to say: "We will ask Julia Hannah to read this for us, she has an english tounge, that is the proper pronounciation".

Not so long ago I met with two old ladies who lived in the same part of the town as we did. They related that the people used to say: "Come, let us go this way perhaps we may get a look at the beautiful english lady".

Well, time passed and we came to 1869. Uncle Reinhold had fallen in love with his English sister-in-law and wanted to marry her.

One very stormy summer day a terrible fire broke out in the town, north side of the river and nearly everything and every house was burned down. The church and some houses around the old "lasarettet". The wind being from the south saved that part of the town. Aunt Hedkvist and I had gone on a trip to Söderhamn to see grandmother and while there we got to know what was going on in Gefle. We took the passenger steamboat the very next day and arrived at Gefle after sunset. I can never forget the sight. Nothing but high naked chimneys and heaps of burning coals everywhere. I kept crying: "Mother is burned! Mother is dead!" Oh it was dreadful.

However when we arrived at our street we found that both my mother and auntie's house were saved. Thanks be to thee my God! But uncle Reinhold had not been so fortunate, people would be coming buying in spite of the fire. He and his partner had lots of things to attend to. They must try to save the valuable books and documents belonging to the business and uncle Reinhold got lots of blisters on his hands and neck. He lost his home, cloths and everything. This made them hurry on with the wedding and as there were no rooms to be had they had to make their home in the room my mother and we lived in. The room was divided and made into two goodsized rooms.



Hannah Haslingden

The wedding was held in aunt Julia's school house which is still to be seen in Kingstreet. I can recall the wedding and see mother. She wore a black dress and on her head some white lace dressing with two lace "sladdar" hanging down her back. Now uncle Reinhold joined our family.

On the opposite side of the street he found a small shop to let and there he started an unassuming business without any partner.

While we lived there my brother Reinhold James Gustav was born 17.6.1870.

When an opportunity came and uncle Reinhold could get a better shop we moved to Islandsгатan where John Henry David 30/12 1871 and Ruth Edla Marianne 12/9 1873 came into the world.

From this place I remember a little lovely episode. We and some other children were gathered on the stairs on the back of the house when a strange gentleman wanted to enter the house. Little Johnnie was just in front of him and he placed his hand on the little fellow's curly head saying: "What's your name deary?" John lifted his bonny blue eyes and answered: "Mammas lilla jaja".

When Ruth was two and a half years old uncle Reinhold had left off his business altogether and got something to do down at the harbour "Järnvägen" and everything seemed alright. We now returned to aunt Hedkvist where we got the second floor all to ourselves, three large rooms and a kitchen. The 22.9.1876 our youngest sister was born, Eleonora Maria. After this mother was taken ill and had to keep to her bed for a whole year and it was a long time before she could walk about. —

While living here we had a pleasant visit from captain Sprengle who had come to Gefle with his ship. His wife was dead and his two sons Herman and Eugen were left with his people in Germany. His stay was not long but mother and I were very glad to have him with us. This was in 1877 and afterwards captain Sprengle and I kept up correspondence which ended with his last letter dated 11/12 1912. When he had left off going to sea, he married a widow who kept a musik shop in South Shields. She had two sons and a daughter. Annie was a splendid pianist and Carnaby the eldest son handled his violin excellently. When I was about 24 years they invited me to spend my summer vacation with them.

How wouldn't mother have enjoyed to join me but her health was so very poor. I felt very sorry for her. I enjoyed that summer and two more with them. Captain Sprengle brought

me to see the place where I was born, a nice little two storied cottage called "Orangeplace" not far from where they lived. Annie spent one summer with me at Sandviken, but sad to say mother was dead then.

At my last trip to England I landed in London and spent a few days there to have a look at the town. Then I continued to Shields. On Bankholyday I made a trip to Aberdeen and Glasgow to see old friends and then back again to Shields and home to Sweden.



Reinhold and Hanna

In 1892 August returned to Europe from a very long voyage. The kolera was raging on the continent and he caught it in Hamburg. His ship left for loading in England and meanwhile he recovered in time to join his ship and be off to Santos, where he fell a victim for the yellow fever. He had been to take a look at a ship he had been offered to take as a captain. Returning he felt ill and went to the hospital where he died within a day or two 1893.

1896 Mother had an apoplectic fit and when I heard about it I got permission to go home to her. She did not recognise me more than once and only for a single moment. I was just bending over her for a few minutes when she opened her eyes looked at me saying: "I remember how glad I was when you were born. I was so glad you were a girl". This was all, but how glad I was to hear those words from her lips, that she had recognised me at last. She died on the ninth day after the fit 11 february 1896.

God bless her. May she rest in peace!

Mother often made funny blunders when she spoke her Swedish. After my brother's August death, when stormy weather was raging she used to say: "I am so glad August has ended his days, that he 'slipper tassa' on the waves".

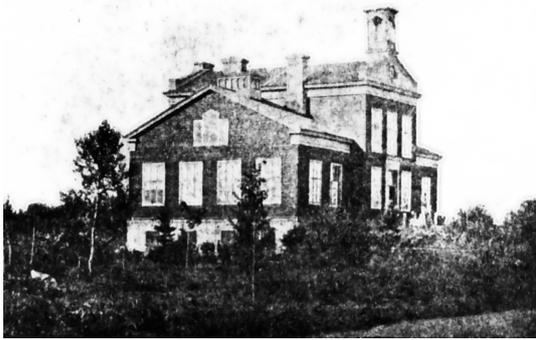


The announcement of Hanna's death

My first school was situated 1 mile from Gefle and I lodged in a farmer's house. Every saturday the farmer's wife used to drive in to the market with one thing or an other to sell. I made use of the opportunity to send some message or other to mother. Returning in the evening she could only say: "Mrs Forsström spoke a lot but I could not understand what she meant". When next I met mother she said: "It is no use you sending that woman with any message to me for I cant understand a single word of her chatting".



Hanna's children



Two schools where Julia worked, The Old School (picture from 1877) and the Olsbacka School (picture from around 1910).



The teachers at Julia's school in Sandviken 1884. From the left: Hanna Forss, Edla Lundgren, F W Samuelsson, Julia Forsström, Marie Louise Hård af Segerstad. Sitting in front: Ida Hess, Mia Ljungkvist.



Teachers having coffee on the stairs at "Hyttgatsskolan". From the left: Julia Forsström, Agnes Elfstrand (handicrafts teacher), Mia Ljungkvist, Ingeborg Sävström and Marie Louise Hård af Segerstad. Picture from the 1890s.

Julia herself died Oct 18 1957 at Ekebyholms hemmet, Rimbo. She was buried in the same grave as her mother Hannah, her stepfather Reinhold and his sister Julia in the old cemetery in Gävle.