

## Axel Sr. and Nanny Lindquist By Doreen Lindquist

Around the time we were married, Axel's dad (Axel Ferdinand) retired from the railroad, and we were asked to house-sit while he and Nanny went on a much deserved trip to Sweden.

From genealogy records and my own experiences as I got to know them, this might be a good time to tell their stories.

Both Axel Sr. and Nanny were of Swedish descent, having emigrated to Canada.

Axel Ferdinand was born in Skarstrud, Sweden on [December 27](#), 1889 to Karl Gustav Lindquist and Brita Kristina Johansson. He served in the military as a young man, possibly in the navy. After emigrating to Canada, he was employed by the C.N.R. as a section worker (railroad maintenance) and later as a foreman. He was married in January, 1917 to Nanny Kristina Carlsson. They lived in Allanwater, Ontario for several years before moving to Sprague, Manitoba in 1933. It is interesting to note that they did not know each other in Sweden.

Nanny was born on [October 19](#), 1892 in Hovmantorp, Sweden to Frans Oscar Carlsson and Anna Kajsa Jurlander. Nanny immigrated to Canada in 1912 at the age of 20.

Four children were born to Axel and Nanny - Anna Gunhild in 1918, Ruth Linnea in 1919, Carl Oscar in 1922 and Axel William in 1929.

As a daughter-in-law and a sister-in-law, I felt very welcomed into their family and got to know them well, their likes and dislikes, talents and personalities. More than anything, I admired the courage Axel and Nanny, along with many other immigrants must have had to venture into a new land with different languages, customs and laws.

Axel's mother had many talents. She was an excellent cook and we always looked forward to sampling her cuisine. Her needlework was exceptionally beautiful and her knitting flawless. Our family was often gifted with her handiwork. Her patience was not limited to her needlework. I was always impressed with her mastery of the English language. She liked to read, and I was told she often had a book in one hand and a Swedish/English dictionary in the other. There were no language classes for newcomers in those days. Probably the only time her patience grew thin was when the wood cook-stove refused to cooperate and one might be treated to her favourite cuss words.

Nanny loved gardening - vegetables, flowers indoors and out. She was always excited when her gladiolas put on a colourful display.

A good sense of humour made her a great match for Axel's dad. He was very outgoing and witty and had a large repertoire of expressions, along with a Swedish accent (which never kept him from expressing himself).

Axel (Jr.) played baseball with a local hardball team in Sprague, and his dad was his faithful fan and chief critic. Any errors by the local team were followed by his father's voice, loud and clear "Yeah, you are a bunch of stumblebums".

He was a commanding presence at the dinner table, never saying "Please pass the spuds", but rather pointing in the general direction of what he wanted, resulting in a mad scramble and the passing in rapid-fire of all the serving dishes until he got what he wanted.

They decided to return to Sweden to visit relatives left behind shortly after we were married. To save money and care for their home in their absence we moved into their house for the duration of their visit. We also acquired their dog - "Pat". This dog developed a great love for me. He brought me presents. One day I looked out the window to see him prancing down the path, proudly carrying a shopping bag. Apparently, he made the rounds every day and came across the bag laying on someone's toboggan. Thought it would make a lovely gift and brought it home. Fortunately, the owner had picked up their mail and left it in the bag. I will never forget the proud look on his face when he presented it to me.

Another time, a Sprague senior passed away and as we "shared" birthdays, I felt I needed to attend the service. Because of past incidents I locked "Pat" in the woodshed, and confident that he was confined, I made my way to the service. Just as all became quiet and somber there was a ruckus at the back of the church... With a huffing and a puffing - Pat had come to find me. He had escaped from the woodshed and must have followed my scent because he was coming in to see me. Ushers attempted to drag him out but he wasn't having any of it. He planted his feet in the big register in the hallway and barked. I apologized and left - with Pat..... It would have been less embarrassing if he wouldn't have been such a scruffy dog.

When Gaylene was born, Axel Sr. came regularly for his coffee break. He would pick her up and put her on the table with the comment "The best we have, we put in the middle of the table". She loved his visits.

When our twins were born, he came to visit me at Roseau hospital. "Yeah," he commented, "I knew you were going to have a litter." They were preemies and it took me a while to come up with the right formula that agreed with their underdeveloped digestive systems. A brand of canned milk called "Farmer's Wife" became the chosen product, and we used it in coffee, baking etc. as well as formula. One day when Axel Sr. came for coffee, he noticed the tin of milk, turned it around a few times and said, "Huh, ven did they start milking them?"

He was always ready to help in any way he could. When we were building our “recycled” house in Atikokan, he helped stuff insulation around the windows and announced with satisfaction “There won’t be any curtains fluttering in this place.” Even the nails in this house were “recycled” and he spent much time hammering them straight.

After he retired from the railway he often worked at the local pub and according to many, was a constant source of entertainment.

Axel’s dad was diagnosed with leukaemia, and died in May, 1965. His mom passed away on [November 10](#), 1976, also a victim of cancer. Both Axel and Nanny are buried in the Sprague cemetery. They will be remembered with fondness and respect by family and friends.