



December 19, 2018

Dearest Natalie,

My father (your great-uncle), Loren Pankratz, gave me a set of postcards last month, and I want to share them with you. The postcards were written, mostly, to my Grandmother (your Great-Grandmother), Anna Otelia Lind Pankratz, primarily between the years of 1910 to 1920. A few of the postcards are to Ruth, one of her two sisters. Grandma was born on November 6, 1906, on a homestead near Boring, Oregon, so she was about your age or younger when she received the cards. They were sent or given for the major holidays, and I've assembled them for you in this book based on the chronological order of the holidays.

One of the reasons that Dad decided to give me the cards now is that I have been spending time in Lindsborg, Kansas, which is branded as "Little Sweden USA." I have a friend who lives there and she has been telling me about Lindsborg for a while. The town was settled in the spring of 1869 by a group of Swedish immigrants from the Värmland province of Sweden led by Pastor Olof Olsson. Lindsborg is planning extensive celebrations for their 150 year anniversary next year.

Between my four grandparents, Grandma was the only one who cared about her cultural history and she REALLY cared. Because both of her parents (and Grandparents who lived nearby) had recently come from Sweden she claimed Swedish as her first language. Her love of her Swedish heritage was enough for me and I've always cherished that connection as my primary heritage too.

Because we were Oregonians I never thought much about the stops her parents and grandparents might have made in the US between Sweden and Grandma's birth place. Luckily, she left us a short biography she wrote about her childhood. I've read it a few times throughout the years but until re-reading it recently I had never thought much about her mention of Kansas. But now since I live in neighboring Arkansas and my friend has been telling me about this Swedish town, I noticed! Grandma's father, John Lind, came from the same area in Sweden, and about the same time as the founders of Lindsborg. Family weddings and burials took place in Lindsborg, according to Grandma, so I knew we needed to visit immediately.

This past June we went to Lindsborg to explore the family history. Genealogy researchers start their quests in Lindsborg at the McPherson County Old Mill Museum. We did as well and information on the family didn't spring forth as quickly as I had assumed. However, in the meantime, I got distracted by the art!!

In addition to being an abundant place for Swedish heritage, this small town is also a fabulous place for art. Bethany College is nationally known for its fine arts and performing arts programs. A celebrated National Geographic photographer lives there with his superbly talented jewelry-making wife (I bought a necklace featuring a Swedish coin from 1620!). And there is also The Red Barn Studio which opened as a museum in September of 1997. Lester Raymer studied at the Chicago Art Institute and worked in almost every medium. The CBS Sunday Morning news show uses one of Lester's iconic sun faces for their logo. Initially, we walked past the entrance. The courtyard area in

front is daunting and leaves you unsure about entering. In the next shop we asked the proprietress if we should go back; she answered with an emphatic YES! So, we went back. And it was... magical.

As soon as we got home from our summer trip, I applied to be an artist-in-residence at the Red Barn Studio. I ended up spending almost two weeks there from November 19th until December 3rd. My stay in the studio was a decadent treat for me and I sincerely enjoyed my time there working on my art and music.

And beginning my work on this book for you.

My Dad sent me 80 postcards and I've split them evenly with you. Some of the text on the cards to Grandma is written in Swedish. Those cards are primarily from her aunt, Emma Danielson, her mother's sister. While I was in Lindsborg, I was sure I would find someone to translate the cards and I did. Maj-Britt Hawk, a lovely Swedish woman, came by the studio one day to look at the cards with me. The text of the cards is generally just birthday or holiday greetings from an aunt to a child but she gave me a nice flavor of the words. The important thing she highlighted is that Emma uses greetings that show deep affection and caring for her treasured niece — which is a wonderful thing to know. Some of the other cards are from schoolmates and friends.

To me the postcards are priceless as a treasure from Grandma. However, I did do a superficial survey to see their current value. Depending on the card, condition, and the artist, the cards might be worth \$5 to \$40 each. Some of the cards aren't stamped, and on many the postmark date is hard to read but most have a one-cent stamp which was the postcard rate until November 1917. In this book, I've put each card in an archival-quality plastic sleeve so that you can see each side, and they will be protected as you read them. The papers on the book cover are handmade — the red has natural fibers with embedded leaves, and the white paper is a Japanese style with a maple leaf pattern that I bought last year in a sublime store in Montreal, Canada. I thought they represented a nice combination honoring Grandma's love of flowers and nature. The photo on this cover is the same one she placed (along with another taken on their family farm) on the short biography she wrote about her childhood. I think those are the only two photos we have of her as a child.

During my recent visit to Lindsborg I was again almost completely distracted by art and I barely left the studio because it was so cold. One day we had a real Kansas blizzard — too cold for me but beautiful! However, my husband, Rick, was with me on Thanksgiving Day and we went out to hike and to explore some of the local cemeteries. Ah ha! We found a few more pieces of the family history puzzle, I think... I had hoped to include some of those pieces in this book but they will take more time. So for now, I hope that you will cherish these cards as I do.

Although we have haven't had many opportunities to be together, please know that you are a treasured member of my family tree. The roots that Grandma gave us are strong and enduring. Your parents are incredible people that I am proud to be related to. Watching you grow up has been a joy and I know marvelous things are in store for you.

Love always,

Beth Anna



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