

THE STORY OF
TWO FAMILIES
AND THEIR
TIMES



CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MORRISTOWN / COLORADO YEARS

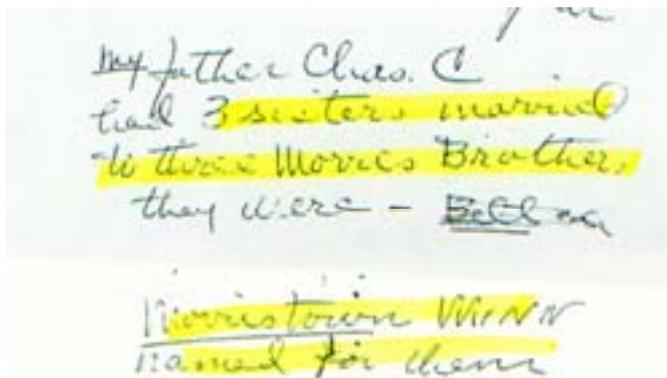
Looking for the Missing Kjällerström Sisters

I mentioned earlier that I was somewhat mystified as to why the Nelsons (Nilssons) and Chilstroms (Kjällerströms) came to the Waukesha area. Now the mystery, at least for the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms), deepens.

For a long time I thought the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms) remained in Wisconsin until 1861 when they joined the Nelsons (Nilssons) in the frontier settlement between present day Willmar and Spicer, Minnesota. That was based on an account in the anniversary book at Lebanon Lutheran Church, New London, Minnesota, that suggested the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms) had come to that community directly from Wisconsin.

Unexpected Information

All that changed one day in mid-2003 when I received a large package of materials from my second cousin Virginia Swedell Croze -- a granddaughter of Charles Chilstrom. In the package was a sheaf of notes that had been left by Ethel Chilstrom, Virginia's aunt and a daughter of Charles. Apparently Ethel had tried to do some genealogical work. The materials, however, were mostly sketchy notes and were not organized in any way. Among them I stumbled on to a note scribbled on a page that said: "My father Chas C. had 3 sisters married to three Morris Brothers. They were.... Morrystown Minn named for them." I checked a map and discovered that Morrystown was a small town a few miles west of Faribault, MN.

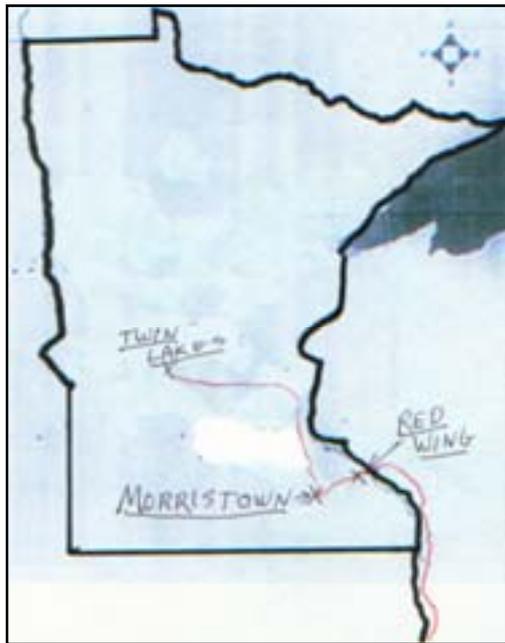


This was an incredible find. Until then I was completely at a loss to know what had happened to these three Chilstrom (Kjällerström) daughters. The only information I had about them was from the old family Bible. There, along with their names and birth dates, are notations beside the names of Anna and Louisa that simply say, "död" – "dead." I had never heard about these three from my father or any of my older

Chilstrom aunts and uncles. You would expect that one of them might have mentioned their three aunts -- their father's sisters. During their growing up years several of my older sisters, especially Lorraine, spent considerable time with their grandmother Hattie Chilstrom. But none of them could recall any mention of Hattie's sisters-in-law. I assumed that these two -- Anna and Louisa -- had died while the family was living in Wisconsin and that the oldest of them, Inga Sophia, may also have died sometime later.

A Needle in a Haystack

This bit of information from Ethel Chilstrom sent me on a hunt for more. I called the city manager in Morristown to find out if there were any Morris families still living in the area. There



were. But when I contacted them they said they were not related to the Morris' that settled the town. I decided to call the pastor of the Methodist Church in Morristown, assuming that with a name like "Morris" they might be Methodist and there might be some information in church records. He didn't think there was, but suggested I contact John Dalby, a person in Faribault who, he said, has the reputation for knowing more about community history in the area than anyone else.

I drove to Faribault and spent an afternoon with Dalby. He has a bank of computers in his basement and shelves of books about the history of the area. He and his wife have walked every cemetery in southeastern Minnesota and recorded the grave markers.

I gave Dalby the names of the three Kjällerström girls and he began the search. For more than two hours I watched as he searched first one resource and then another. I was certain that he would find nothing. Then suddenly he said, "Here they are." I think he was as delighted as I. It was like striking oil! Now I felt virtually certain that this must be our family.

Following my visit with Dalby, I went to the Rice County Historical Museum in Faribault to seek any other information I might find about Morristown and the Morris family. I was amazed at the wealth of material that I unearthed. Among other things, I found a note from Barbara LaBarr, a Morris family descendant, who said she had additional information that she would be happy to share with anyone who wanted to contact her. I called her in the small village of Cowiche, Washington. Yes, she recognized the name "Chilstrom" and said she would be willing to share what she had. A couple of weeks later there came a large packet of material with a wealth of information about the Morris family, their history, and the marriages of the three Chilstrom women to three Morris men.

The Roots of the Morris Family

It would be possible to write volumes about the Morris family. I'll try to confine my comments to

a brief synopsis.

Moses Morris, the patriarch of the family, came to America from Wales at about the time of the Revolutionary War -- sometime around the 1770s. He married Martha McMullen, the daughter of an Irish family that came to America to escape the repression of the Roman Catholic Church. These were rare people -- Irish Protestants.

Jonathan, the eldest son of Moses and Martha Morris, was born January 9, 1804. In 1822 Jonathan married Sarah Starbuck who gave birth to eight sons and one daughter.

Jonathan was, by and large, a self-educated man. He was converted at a revival meeting. His tutor was Alexander Campbell, the son of Thomas Campbell. Both Campbells were famous religious leaders in early America. First known as "Campbellites," (though the Campbells never used that term), the followers of the Campbells became a loosely-connected religious group on the frontier.

Alexander Campbell

Alexander Campbell was born in Ireland and was raised as a Presbyterian. He attended school in Scotland before coming to America. He was well-educated, his father Thomas being one of his teachers. Alexander followed his father to America and engaged in evangelistic work. At first both father and son identified with the Presbyterian Church. Before long however, they became disillusioned with the divisions among competing churches in America. They envisioned a church that would go by the standards set down among Christians at the beginning and as envisioned in the Bible in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. They longed for simplicity, greater freedom of thought and a church that was not bound by creeds. Their theme became: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Alexander Campbell was not what we today would call a "fundamentalist." He was open to new ideas. He believed in education for all people, not just the children of the gentry. He believed we should be free to pursue truth wherever it might lead. The college he founded in West Virginia -- Bethany -- was and is a true liberal arts institution. One source describes Campbell as

... a figure of uncommon prominence in his own day; an educational pioneer, a renowned debater, political reformer and philosopher, prolific author and publisher, successful businessman, and agricultural leader.

As they moved across the American frontier the Campbells, father and son, found a positive response among the settlers and many joined their movement. Though Alexander Campbell was not interested in forming another denomination, the movement eventually took on the shape of another organized church and is known today as The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is regarded today as a "mainline" denomination. However, unlike so many American mainline denominations that trace their roots to European churches, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one of the churches that was born on the American frontier.

Jonathan Morris

Picking up the story of Jonathan Morris again, we find that once he had been trained by Alexander Campbell, Morris began his own ministry, preaching throughout Ohio, Indiana and the Midwest. There are claims that as many as 10,000 persons were converted as a result of his preaching. I have no way of knowing whether this is a wild guess or an accurate figure. Given the nature of life on the frontier, my assumption is that it is a general estimate. But even if the figure is not accurate, he must have been a commanding figure and a compelling preacher. It was said that he could recite entire chapters of the Bible from memory.

The Morris Family Moves to Minnesota

In the early 1850s Jonathan decided to move his family from Ohio to Minnesota. Why this abrupt change for a seemingly successful preacher in his early 50s? We don't know. Was his income as a preacher insufficient to feed his large family? Did he decide that life on the new frontier looked like a better alternative? Did he want to do evangelism work among the settlers on the western frontier and possibly among Native Americans? Was he burned out from preaching to large crowds and seeking a new setting to do another kind of work? At this point, we don't know, and probably never will.

What we know is that after a brief stay in St. Paul he moved on to Hastings, MN and then to Faribault, MN. Together with his son Walter he searched along the Cannon River west of Faribault for an appropriate site to build a saw and feed mill. Jonathan and Walter found what they thought was the ideal spot and built a mill in 1855. That same fall Jonathan established the first Christian congregation in the village. The initial membership was ten and they met in his home. This settlement is the place that eventually became Morristown.

Because of a flaw in the construction the river undermined the mill and it was ruined. Jonathan and son Walter began reconstruction immediately. Because of exhaustion and pneumonia, Jonathan fell ill and died in November, 1855 at the age of 51. I have visited Jonathan's grave at Riverside Cemetery in Morristown where the marker reads: "Jonathan Morris Founder of Morristown." By the fall of 1856 Walter had rebuilt the mill and took his father's place as minister of the congregation.

During this same time others began to settle into the community. Sarah, widow of Jonathan, had the town site laid out in lots. Among those who came to the village was the Kjällerström family.



Reconstructed Morristown Mill from both sides.



Before moving on to write about the Kjällerström's connection with Morristown, it's worth noting these words by The Rev. J.D. Neill, who recorded much of the history of the Morris family:

The descendants (of the Morris family) are characterized by courage, loyalty, diligence, patriotism, and a capacity for leadership. Outstanding as soldiers, statesman, lawyers, clergymen, physicians and writers.

As we are about to see, the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms), who had the reputation in Sweden for "marrying up" into a higher class, are about to do the same in America.

Why Morristown?

We don't know exactly when the Kjällerströms arrived in Morristown. A clue, however, may be the genealogical record from the family of Sarah McMullen Morris. There I discovered that Nathan and Inga Sophia (Chilstrum) Morris' son George was born "about 1857 in Indiana." (Another record indicates that there was an older child named Harry. Since he is not a part of the Minnesota census I have to assume he died in infancy.) That tells me that Inga Sophia and Nathan Morris certainly met and married prior to the move to Morristown. Did Inga go from her home in Waukesha, Wisconsin, to a revival meeting in Indiana where she met and married Nathan, the son of the famous preacher? That's my best guess. Or could they have met some other place? Did Nathan come to Wisconsin for some reason, meet Inga there in the Waukesha area, marry her, and take her back with him to Indiana? That doesn't seem likely. After they married and had their first child, did they decide to follow the rest of the family to Minnesota and to Morristown? That seems likely. And is that why the rest of the Chilstrom (Kjällerström) family moved to Morristown rather than go on to the Eagle Lake area with their friends, the John Nelsons (Nilssons)? That seems like a fair assumption. So many questions; so few absolute answers.

The 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census

What we know for certain is that all of the Kjällerströms were in Morristown by 1857. The 1857 Minnesota Territorial census for Rice County -- where Morristown is located -- lists not only the names and ages of the residents, but also their place of origin and their occupation. Most were transplants from Eastern states -- especially New England, Ohio and Pennsylvania. There were also a large number from Ireland and Germany and a few pockets of Norwegian settlers. But among all the names -- possibly more than 2,000 -- I found only one family with origins in Sweden -- the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms)

I can only conclude that the Chilstroms (Kjällerströms) -- father, mother, two daughters and three sons -- came to Morristown because Inga Sophia was already there. Had that not been the case, they surely would have gone to a Swedish settlement, of which there were several in Minnesota by that time.

In the 1857 Territorial Role 4 contains the names every one living in Rice County. The heading on page 124 (pictured at right) reads: “Inhabitants of Morrystown County of Rice, Territory of Minnesota, enumerated by me this 7th day of October, 1857.” signed by “Charles Assistant Marshall.” On we find the Chilstroms (Kjöllerströms). The name, however, is listed as “Chilstrum” -- yet another Magnus’ first name appears script as something like “Molnus” and his wife is “Catherine.” He is described as a “farmer.” children are listed as “John,” “August,” “Chal,” “Louisa.” By this time both “Sophia” and “Ann” are listed with their husbands, Nathan Morris and Walter Morris.

the number of inhabitants Families numbered in the order of enumeration	NAME Of every person who resided in this family on the 21st day of September, 1857.	Age	Sex	Color	PLACE OF BIRTH	VETERAN	
						Native	Naturalized
1	Holme Chilstrum	48	M	W	Sweden		1
2	Catherine Chilstrum	44	F	W	"		
3	John Chilstrum	12	M	W	"		
4	August Chilstrum	9	M	W	"		
5	Chal Chilstrum	6	M	W	"		
6	Louisa Chilstrum	12	F	W	"		
7	Nathan Morris	27	M	W	Eng		1
8	Sophia Morris	21	F	W	Sweden		
9	Walter Morris	21	M	W	"		
10	Ann Morris	17	F	W	"		

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It shouldn't surprise us that there are discrepancies in spelling from one document to another. Picture the scene. The census taker knocks on your door. He speaks a language you can scarcely understand. When you give him your name, especially one as complex as “Kjöllerström,” he writes down what he hears. And since Magnus did not know English, or at least not very well, there was no way to correct the record.

We have to wonder what kind of “farmer” Magnus Kjöllerström was. We know that there was a serious crop failure in 1858, the first year he would have had a chance to farm. We also know that about this time it was discovered that the woods in southeast Minnesota was full of ginseng, a valuable medicinal root that was treasured for its alleged healing powers. Many became engaged in digging among the roots of the giant trees in the area in search of ginseng. On a good day one could earn as much as three or four dollars -- a good wage in those times. Did Magnus and his sons (including my fourteen year old grandfather John) do this kind of “farming” in addition to whatever else they did? It's a possibility.

More Weddings

Once the Kjöllerströms arrived in Morrystown it didn't take long before Walter Morris decided that his brother Nathan had made a good choice for a bride. Within a short time he and Anna Catrina Chilstrum were married. The marriage took place on July 4, 1857. The certificate indicates the ceremony was held “at the house of Isaac Hammond in the town of Faribault (sic), County of Rice....”



The Morris "Family Record" showing the marriage of Ann Chilstrum to Walter Morris.

Besides his other work, Walter continued as the minister of the local Christian Church,

Two years later John Morris married "Louisa Fredrica Chilstrum" on December 1, 1859. The marriage certificate states that they were married "at the house of J.T. Weatland." This certificate, unlike the one for Anna and Walter, states, among other things, that "*there appeared no lawful impairment to such marriage.*"

Those Chilstrom (Chilstrum) Women -- American Tragedies / American Dream

With a bit of imagination one could write novels about the three Chilstrom (Chilstrum) sisters. I can only share a bit of their stories.

Anna Catrina Chilstrom (Chilstrum) Morris

As I have said, Walter Morris seems to have wasted no time in claiming Anna "Chilstrum" as his new bride. Walter shows every sign of being an industrious man. As I have noted, he helped his father build the mill and then rebuild it himself. He served the small Christian Church as its minister. He also opened a store near the mill, which he sold after a year. Walter became the first postmaster and justice of the peace in Morristown. One of the more interesting accounts about Walter that has been preserved is the story of how he and Alexander Faribault led a band of 500 Indians across the Redwood River so that they could collect the pay they had been promised from the U.S. government.



Walter Morris. No date is on the photograph.

The account goes on:

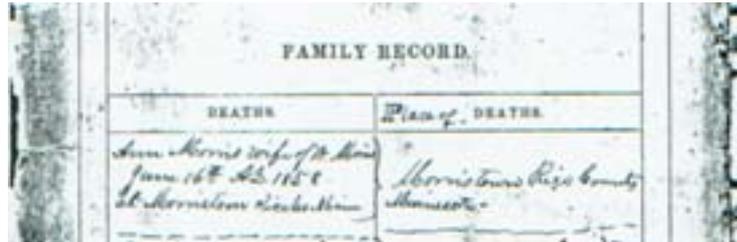
While on the way the Indians got drunk and made numerous threats but were finally sobered down and reached their destination in safety. After leaving Mankato, they traveled two and one-half days without finding food and finding a skunk which made them a meal, they thought themselves fortunate.

Walter also ran a stage coach of some sort that brought new immigrants from Hastings on the Mississippi River to the Morristown area. This fuels my imagination, wondering if it was on one of Walter's conveyances that the Kjölleström family came to Morristown to be reunited with Inga Sophia and her family. And is it possible that Walter and Anna became acquainted on the long ride from Hastings to Morristown, a trip that led

eventually to the altar?

Whatever its bright beginnings, Anna's life followed the tragic pattern of many women on the American frontier. She became pregnant after only two months of marriage. She died June 11, 1858, almost a month before her first wedding anniversary, while giving birth to a little girl. In her honor the child was also named "Anna" or "Annie."

*A note in the Morris
"Family Record"
about the death of
"Ann Morris wife of W. Morris, June 16th
A.D. 1858 at
Morristown."*



One of the interesting items that has come down through one of the Morris descendents is the claim that Annie liked to tell the story that when her mother Anna was a young girl in Sweden she "*cavorted with the children of the King of Sweden, as she was a cousin. That I know for certain, as it was one of Annie's favorite stories about her mother.*" It may have been one of Annie's "favorite stories," but, unless someone can uncover evidence to the contrary, I have to believe that it is pure fiction. The Chilstroms (Kjollerströms) in Sweden were hardly the kind of genteel family that would have associated with the King's family and the speculation that Anna, the mother, was a cousin of the King's children was no doubt a child's fantasy. I'd be delighted, of course, if someone proved me to be wrong!

Anna Catrina's remains lie in an unmarked grave in the Morristown Riverside Cemetery near her father-in-law Jonathan. I am working with the Cemetery manager to ascertain the exact site, but so far we have been unable to locate it. When and if we do, I hope to place an appropriate monument at the place. Baby "Annie" was cared for by her father Walter and her widowed grandmother Sara.

Anna Catrina's life was indeed a sad one. She is the Swedish immigrant girl who lived through incredible hardship while a child in Sweden, endured the arduous crossing of the treacherous Atlantic Ocean, and spent her teenage years striving for survival in Wisconsin. Then, finally, her fortunes seemed to change. She married Walter Morris, an enterprising man who promised her a bright future. But it all ends in agonizing childbirth and premature death in her twentieth year.

Indeed, it is the American tragedy.



Walter eventually remarried and moved to Colorado where he farmed for a year or two before grasshoppers drove him out. He settled in Missouri for a time and then came back to Morristown where he lived out his years and is buried in a handsome grave in Riverside Cemetery.

Annie Morris, daughter of Anna Chilstrum Morris and John Morris. Her mother died when Annie was born in 1858. Annie lived to be 100 and was the mother of many children.

Louisa Fredrika Chilstrom (Chilstrum) Morris

After his father's death, Louisa's husband John Morris assisted his mother Sara in fulfilling his father's wish that the town should be plotted. It took John Morris a bit longer than his brother Walter to choose a "Chilstrum" girl for his bride. But after she had lived in Morristown for two years Louisa and John were married. A son Cassius arrived just eleven months later and less than two years later a second son, Winfield, was born. A year later Louisa, like her sister Anna, died while giving birth to a baby daughter. In this case, however, the baby did not survive. Louisa was only twenty-three. Another American tragedy. Louisa's body also lies in an unmarked grave in the Riverside Cemetery at Morristown.



The Riverside Cemetery at Morristown, MN. Anna Chilstrom Morris and Louisa Chilstrom Morris are buried somewhere in this area in unmarked graves. The large grave at the flagpole is that of their father-in-law Jonathan Morris, founder of Morristown. In the background are grave markers for their husbands Walter and John.

Now the grandmother Sara had three orphaned grandchildren to care for -- Annie age 6, Cassius age 3 and Winfield 1 ½.

Several years later John took his mother, his two sons and little Annie and went by ox cart to Pueblo, Colorado, hoping to find a future where his older brother Nathan had already settled. That move proved unsatisfactory to his mother and John returned to Minnesota with her and the three small children. In time John remarried and moved to Duluth for ten years with his new family, including Cassius, Winfield and Annie. Among other things, John worked on the construction of the Lake Superior breakwater along the Duluth shoreline. He had several more children by his second wife.

But the West called again and this time he settled first in Syracuse, Nebraska in 1873 and then in

Logan County in northwestern Colorado in 1893. Here his sons Cassius and Winfield would take root and establish themselves as prominent citizens of the area. Annie, the orphan child, grew to adulthood and eventually married and moved to California. She raised a large family and lived to be over 100, dying in 1958. I have located some of her descendants.

Before we leave John Morris it's worth citing this word about him, written by Bertha Rogers, a Morris family descendant:

John Morris took an early interest in spiritual things, and when a young man, united with the Christian Church, remaining true to the faith throughout his life. He was superintendent of Sunday school for many years as well as a director of school boards. He was overseer of roads in Logan County and built the first surfaced road through the sand hills between Fleming and Sterling. No spirit of selfishness or unfairness found place in his life. No unclean language was heard from his lips. No appeal of worthy need passed unheeded. Those who knew him were those who loved and respected him.

This was the husband of Louisa Chilstrom, my grandfather John's next oldest sister. Like her sister, the scroll of her life is one of hardship, hope and tragedy. As with Anna, I will try to locate the exact site of her burial and place a marker on it.

A Visit to Colorado

In October of 2004 my wife Corinne and I visited Fleming, Colorado on our annual trip from Minnesota to Arizona. We came on a Sunday morning. As we drove into the village of 1,000 in the treeless country of northwestern Colorado it was apparent that the only place of activity was the local grocery store/café. We inquired as to whom in town might know something of its history. We were told to contact Wanda West. Though we were reluctant to disturb her on a Sunday morning, she was not only happy to receive us into her home, but soon gave us the keys to the local historical museum, located in the old railroad depot. There we found much information about the Morris's, especially Cassius. An entire display was devoted to him and his family. It was hard to believe that here I stood looking at my father's first cousin and that a mere three months prior to that moment I didn't know a thing about him or his brother Winfield or his mother Louisa, other than that she had died!

We worshipped at the local Methodist Church that morning where some of the old timers recalled hearing their parents talk about the "Morris boys."

Cassius and Winfield Morris

In 1888 Cassius (Cash) and Winfield (Win) reserved a in Nebraska and shipped all their belongings to Culbertson, NE -- apparently the end of the line. From they moved by mule train and wagon to Fleming, CO. brothers took out claims and settled three miles west of Fleming. Though Cash made his living at farming and ranching, he was widely known for his 24 years as a



rail car
there
Both
Logan

County commissioner.

Cassius Morris, son of Louisa Chilstrum (Chilstrum) Morris and John Morris.

In 1901 C. Bloomer, a cousin of Cash and Win, came from Waterville, MN (near Morristown) to visit the Morris' in Colorado. In a long letter to the Morristown Press, dated December 16, 1901, he describes what life was like in Fleming CO. Among other things, he says

Everybody seems to enjoy himself here. All the people here are a church going people and temperate: even the city of Fleming has no saloon in it, nor the township either. I don't know how the people manage to get whiskey for snakebite, but then I guess they manage.

Winfield Morris, brother of Cassius, worked for the land company that laid out the village of Fleming and hauled in much of the lumber that was used to build the town. In the years that followed he was engaged in a variety of occupations, including a newspaper that folded after only a year or two, county road overseer, county assessor and a real estate business.

In 1895 Win and his family moved a few miles west to Sterling, Colorado, where he, too, became a prominent citizen as a county commissioner. I have been in touch with Winfield's grandson, Paul Morris -- my second-cousin, once removed. Paul is a bishop in the Mormon Church in Provo, Utah.

In 1930 the WPA -- part of President Roosevelt's "New Deal" program -- hired writers from across the country to interview "old timers" to preserve their memory of early years on the American frontier. Win Morris was one of those who was interviewed for an oral history. Here are his recollections:

I, Winfield Morris, was born on the 30th day of May, 1862 at Morristown, Minn. My father passed through what is now Logan County, in 1864 from Minn. Driving an ox team. We went to Pueblo, Colo. We did not stay long and any events that happened on this trip would only be 'hearsay' so will not mention them. I was just about two years old. We went back to Minn., going to Duluth in 1869 and lived there for eight years. In 1877 we drove out to Otoe Count, Nebraska. In the winter of 1884-85 I came to Pueblo again, but did not stay long and went back to Nebraska in Sept., 1886. I came to what is now Logan County in company with some other young fellows. We stopped at Crook where we met J.W. Ramsey and he located us on timber claims. I then went back to Nebr. And stayed until the following February 1887, when myself and some of these other fellows who had taken claims came back to Logan County. The bunch of us chartered a railroad car and shipped to Culbertson, Nebr. Part of the boys were going to Kansas and part to Colorado, but we only took one car and unloaded at Culbertson. After we had unloaded and gotten our things fixed up, they all made up their minds that they would go to Kansas and wanted me to go with them. But I told them, 'No, that I had started to Colorado, and that was where I was going.' So I took my own mule team and

covered wagon and started up the Frenchman River to Colorado alone. The first night I stayed at a small place in Nebr. It was very cold and the wind was blowing a gale. I put my team in the livery barn and I slept in the wagon. I got so cold during the night --- and having a lot of baled hay -- got up and put this hay around the wagon to break the wind. I did not know enough to get down under.

At the time of his death Win's wife Annie wrote these comments in her diary:

This is a beautiful morning and the day we are going to lay Dad away. There were banks of beautiful flowers all around the casket, which is a bronze steel casket. Win looks ten years younger, and almost a happy look on his face. Church filled with people. Lovely funeral sermon by Rev. Konkel. Procession over one half mile. The Rebekah's put on a lovely noon dinner for family at our home & out of town families. Ham, beans, salad, hot (buttered) rolls scalloped potatoes jellies coffee cream etc. About 12 present."

Inga Sophia Chilstrom (Chilstrum) Morris

If Anna and Louisa lived the American tragedy, Inga Sophia seems to have lived the American dream. As I noted earlier, she was the first of the Kjällerström daughters to marry a Morris -- Nathan Morris. As best as I can piece together the story, Nathan and Inga Sophia followed Nathan's parents and older brother Walter to Minnesota and settled in Morristown for several years.

It seems that before long the call to "go west, young man," to move to the frontier, was compelling. Whenever folks became disillusioned with where they lived, they could always pull stakes and move on to the far horizon.

I have no idea what may have motivated Nathan and Inga Sophia to embark on the difficult journey to Colorado in 1863. After all she had been through, beginning in Sweden and continuing through her early life in America, I have to believe that Inga Sophia might have been content to settle down in Morristown. Then again, she may have shared the spirit of adventure that moved her parents to leave Sweden and come to America. And given the same drive that motivates the Morris family to keep moving to new horizons, here may have been a couple -- Nathan and Inga Sophia -- for whom the move to Colorado was inevitable.

Their destination in Colorado was present day Pueblo, now a major city in the southeast corner of the state. When I fly over the country between Minnesota and Colorado today and look down at modern highways and railroads it's impossible to imagine how difficult the journey must have been. Most pioneers traveled by ox cart at an average speed of 3 miles per hour. In his review of the book "*The Oregon Trail*," William Grimes gives us a glimpse of what it was like:

This is the primal American drama. Like their emigrant European forebears, the Americans who followed the trail pulled up stakes, gathered their belongings and moved their families thousands of miles into an unknown future. Even today the ruts left by their wagon wheels can be seen along a route that ran... to the Pacific Coast. No matter how one proceeded, the trip west was brutal.... Wagon wheels stuck fast in the mud below the shallow Platte River. Water was scarce on the plains.

Indians took matters into their own hands, swooping down on wagon trains to steal horses or cattle or adapting an aggressive form of panhandling. Many emigrants found it hard to say no when a party of Indians approached and asked, in no uncertain terms, for a cow.

Nearly as bad, it seems, was the buffalo gnat, which one traveler called 'the most detestable thing in creation.' Small but vicious, it struck without warning, and 'before you are conscious of its presence, has bitten your face, ears and neck in 10,000 places. My face at one time had the appearance of one with small pox, my eyes were swollen up so much that I



could hardly see, and my ears as thick as my hand.' Those who escaped disease, hunger and frostbite sometimes did the job themselves. It was not uncommon for travelers to shoot themselves when unloading a wagon or for careless children to be crushed under wagon wheels. One boy suffered only a few cracked ribs when the wagon that rolled over him pushed him deep into the mud.

New York Times, Dec. 8, 2004

While Nathan was busy getting involved in a number of local enterprises, Inga Sophia was more than occupied in her role as wife and mother. Unlike her sisters, she seems to have enjoyed robust health and bore one child after another until there were ten in all.

Nathan's first occupation was that of "freight agent." I assume that meant that he transferred goods from a depot to merchants and others in the Pueblo area. He appears to have been involved in several other enterprises, including the discovery of magnesium deposits a few miles east of old Pueblo. His most profitable investment, however, may have been his purchase of 200 lots in what became East Pueblo for a sum of \$5,000. Nathan's obituary in the Pueblo newspaper gives us an idea of how important he was in early Pueblo:



Old Pueblo where Nathan Morris and his sons were engaged in several business enterprises. Photo is not dated.

Nathan Morris was one of the oldest pioneers in this section of the state. His funeral will occur from his residence, 713 East Fifth Street... W.T. Hilton, pastor of the Central Christian Church, will conduct the services at the house. Many of the old timers have passed away in the past few months, but none of them perhaps have rendered more active service to the city of Pueblo than has the deceased. He came here in 1863 when Pueblo was a mere Indian trading post. He homesteaded all the land that is now known as East Pueblo. There is hardly an abstract given for property on the east side that does not have his name on it. He has resided in the home from which the funeral will take place for 54 years, and since the death of his wife has been cared for by servants.



*Nathan Morris and Inga Sophia (Chilstrum) Morris.
Photos are not dated.*

The obituary goes on to list his civic and business activities: Member of the first school board and first city council in Pueblo, partner in the building of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (serving as chair of the arrangements committee that welcomed the first train into Pueblo), built a drug store at the corner of Fourth and Santa Fe and ran it with two of his sons for 25 years, played a key role in obtaining the charter for accepting Colorado as a State. Among the “*known members of the family*” listed in the obituary are: Fred and Nate Morris, Mrs. O.L. Wiley and Mrs. T..E. Zeiger of Pueblo; Mrs. T. R. Calloway of Montrose, CO; Mrs. O.L. Call of Springfield, MO; George Morris of Ohio City, CO; Grant Morris of San Francisco, CA; Harry Morris of Falon, NV.

As noted earlier, Inga Sophia predeceased Nathan by several years. Her obituary, published in the Pueblo Chieftain, is simple by contrast:

The funeral of Mrs. N. Morris will take place this afternoon at 2 o'clock from 504 West 5th Street, corner of Center. Friends of the family are welcome.



The burial places for Sophia and Nathan Morris in Pueblo, CO. In addition to the tall marker, each grave has an individual marker. On each marker are inscribed the words: "At rest." To the left of Sophia's grave is the burial site of grandson Thomas Zeiger who died at age 2 in 1893.