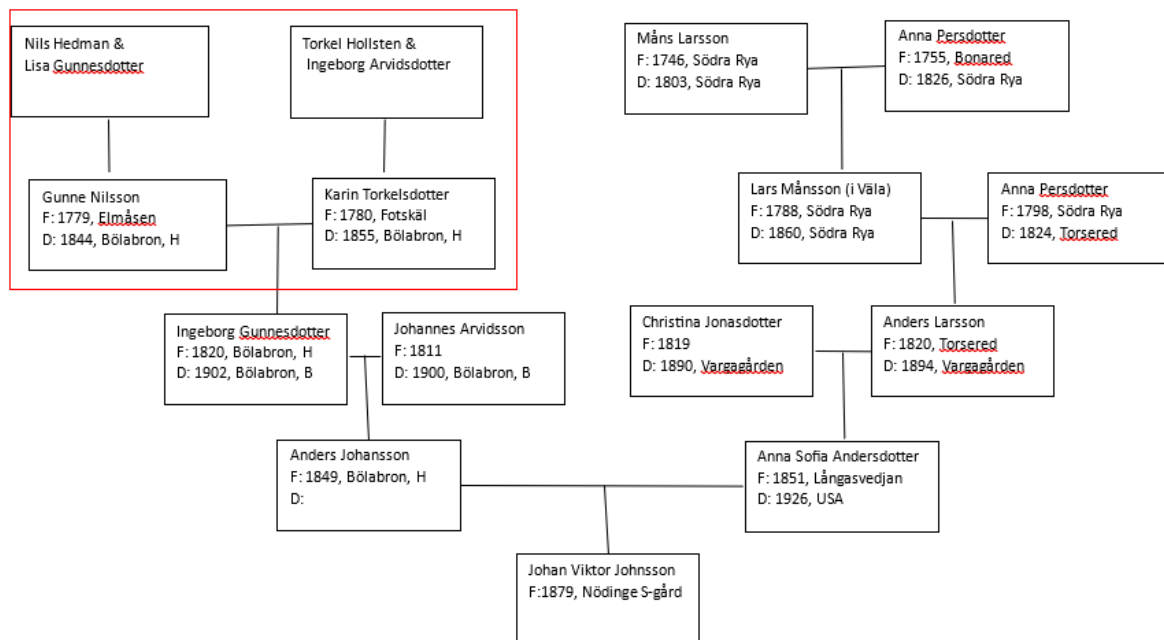


Visit from Amerika in Bölabron, 2023

On the following pages, we will follow two family lines that both end with Joanne's grandfather Johan Viktor. The first starts in the middle of the 18th century in the Bölabron croft (torp) in Hajom's parish (socken). The second starts at the farm Södra Rya in Hyssna parish. Hajom and Hyssna are neighboring parishes and are part of Mark's county (härad), which contains a total of 27 parishes. Mark's county is in turn one of seven counties that are usually referred to as the Sjuhäradsbygden, located around the city of Borås.

Bölabron, Hajoms socken

Gunne Nilsson och Karin Torkelsdotter, Bölabron Hårsås



Gunne was born in 1779 at the soldier's croft Elmåsen in Hyssna, a croft that has now disappeared. Seven years earlier, the period in Swedish history known as the Freedom Period (Frihetstiden) had ended with King Gustav III's coup d'état. The coup meant that the more democratic rule of the Freedom Period was replaced by an almost royal autocracy. This probably did not affect the approx. 80% of Sweden's population who lived in the countryside to any great extent. The countryside where Gunne was born was mainly populated by farmers and crofters (torpare). The farmers were generally self-employed and engaged in small farms and some livestock rearing. The crofters, who had a lower status compared to the farmers, did not have their own farms but rented a smaller croft, often located on land that belonged to a farm. A small field belonged to the croft and you usually had a cow and maybe a goat. You had to make a living through crafts and helping on the farmer's farm.

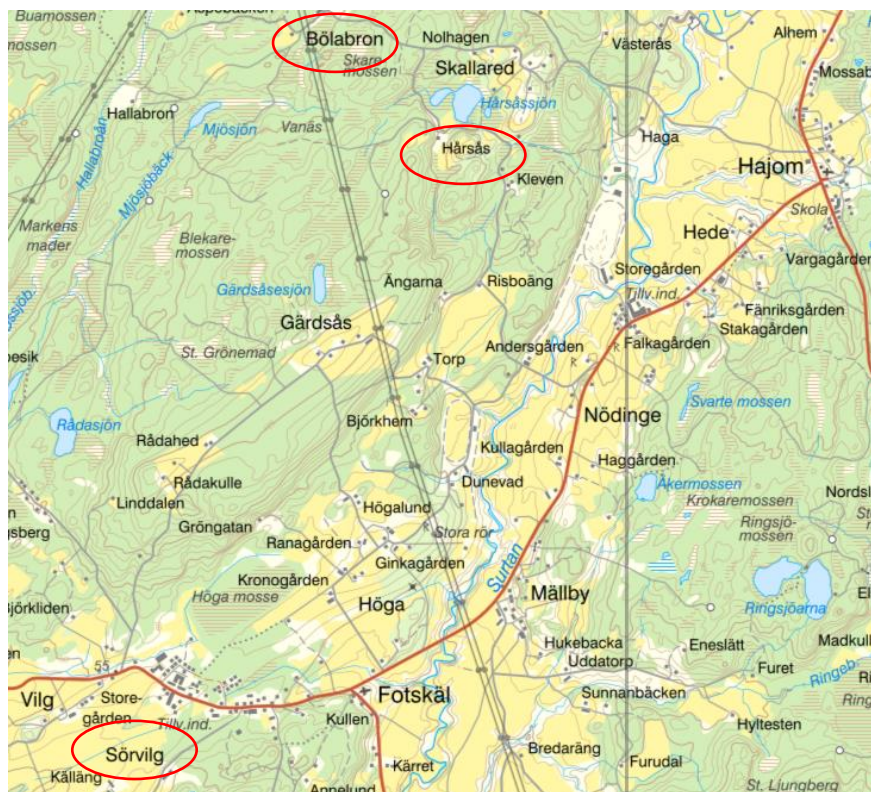
Each parish also had a number of soldier's cottages, where the local soldiers lived with their families. The system at that time was that two or three farms, a so-called rote, joined together to recruit a soldier and provide him with a cottage. The farmers were also obliged to assist the soldier's family when the soldier was away on training or at war.

The soldier had a relatively good position in the area and was counted as standing slightly above the crofters. Unlike most others in the parish, he had often seen other parts of the country and perhaps even been abroad. In church on Sundays he was allowed to wear his uniform and thus stood out among the other visitors. In addition, he was often literate and sometimes taught local children. The soldiers probably contributed to the fact that literacy among rural people was quite high at this time.

Gunne's father, Nils, was a soldier and belonged to the Älvsborg Regiment, the Major's Company. This company consisted of 150 soldiers, who all lived around Marks härad.

We can imagine that Gunne grew up in poor conditions. When he was nine years old, a war broke out between Sweden and Russia, and his father was called up for military service and sent to fight in Finland, a country that was then part of Sweden. His mother, Lisa, was then left alone to support the home with Gunne and his three younger siblings. Although she probably received some help from the local farmers, she now had to look after the farmhouse, its animals and agriculture, and make sure there was food on the table.

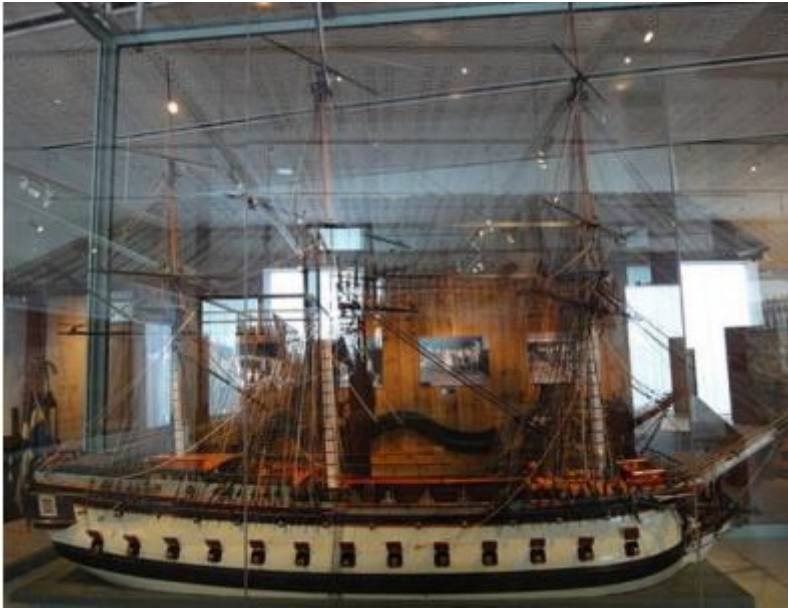
Karin's father, Torkel, was also a soldier. He belonged to the same company as Nils, which means that they must have known each other. Torkel belonged to an old family of soldiers and his father and grandfather had also been soldiers. Karin was born in 1780 on a soldier's croft under the farm Sörvilg in Fotskäls parish. This croft is now gone as well. Torkel and his wife Ingeborg had three daughters, of which Karin was the oldest and thus eight years old when the war with Russia broke out. Like Nils, Torkel was then transferred to Finland, where he served in the navy operating in Finska viken.



Karin and Gunne's childhood and marriage

The war with Russia lasted until 1790 and peace returned to the kingdom. The soldiers who had survived could therefore return home. One must imagine, however, that those who survived may have done so as invalids or were marked by other illnesses.

Karin's father, Torkel, unfortunately did not survive the war. He had served as a sailor on the warship Gustaf Adolf during the war. As I write more about on my website, the ship took part in the famous Battle of Hogland in Finska viken on July 17, 1888. Later that year, the Russians captured the Gustaf Adolf, burned it and took the crew prisoner.



Contemporary model of the ship Gustaf Adolf, Karlskrona Museum.

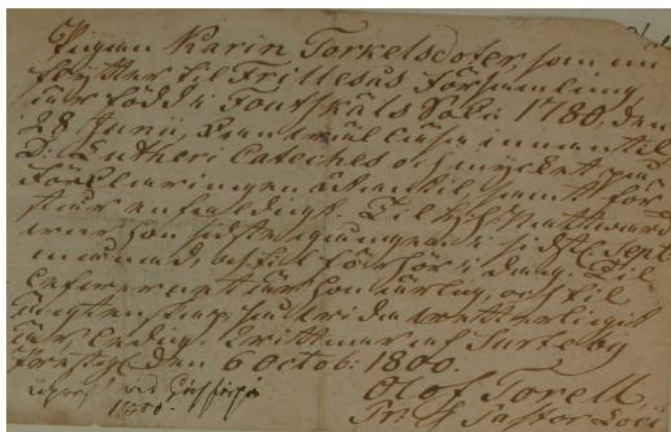
Exactly what happened to Torkel is unclear, but the Swedish church records state that he died in captivity in Finland in 1789. Presumably it was from some disease.

After her father's death, Karin and the family had to move from the soldier's croft under Sörvilg. They settled in a nearby croft under the farm Sträte. More information about her mother Ingeborg and the children is missing until 1800, when a document indicates that Karin has now started working as a maid on a farm in Frillesås in Halland County. Before the move to Frillesås, the priest gives the following certificate and on the reverse side the priest in Frillesås has given a certificate in connection with Karin's return in 1803.

Min tolkning:

Pigan Karin Torkelsdotter som nu flyttar til Frillesås församling ähr född i Foutskäls Soch. 1780 den 28 juni. Kan wäl läsa innantil S: Lutheri Cateches och mycket på förklaringarna utantil samt förstår enfaldigt. Til H:H Nattward ware hon sidste gången d. sidste sept: månad och till förhör i dag. Til lefwernet är hon ärlig och til Äktenskap såwida wetterligt är ledig. Wittnar af Surteby Prästeg. Den 6 octob: 1800

Olof Torell
Pr: & Pastor Loci



Handwritten Swedish text from a church record, dated October 6, 1800. The text mentions Karin Torkelsdotter and Olof Torell. The handwriting is in a cursive script typical of the early 19th century.

På andra sidan av anteckningen anges följande:

Å andra sidan nämnde piga Karin Torkelsdotter flyttar nu efter 3:ne åhrs tjenstetid här i församlingen, till Hajjom socken, Berghems pastorat med till alla delar lika witnesbörd som hon fått med sig hit, undantagande att hon för närwarande skall wara förlofwad med drängen Sven Börgesson wid Skallared i Hajjom. Frillesås Prästeg. d: 13 Oct. 1803

Carl A Ahlgren
?? Präst



Handwritten Swedish text from a church record, dated October 13, 1803. The text mentions Karin Torkelsdotter and Sven Börgesson. The handwriting is in a cursive script typical of the early 19th century.

First page:

The maid Karin who is now moving to Frillesås parish was born in Fotskäls parish. She can read Luther's catechism and knows the explanations by heart. She went to the Lord's Supper last September and to the hearing today. She is honest and, as far as I know, free to marry.

Second page:

On the other page, the mentioned maid Karin Torkelsdotter is now moving after 3 years of service here in the parish to Hajjom parish, Berghem pastorate in all parts the same testimony that she has brought here, except that she is currently engaged to the farmhand Sven Börgesson at Skallared in Hajjom.

The document thus mentions that Karin is engaged to a Sven Börgesson and they later married in 1804 and had two children. They move to the croft Bölabron under the farm Hårsås. It is probably Karin and Sven who built the croft.

Unfortunately, a new war with Russia breaks out in 1808 and Sven is drafted and stationed in Stockholm. He died there the same year from a disease that was rampant among the soldiers and Karin was left alone with two children. It is clear from Sven's estate inventory that they were poor.

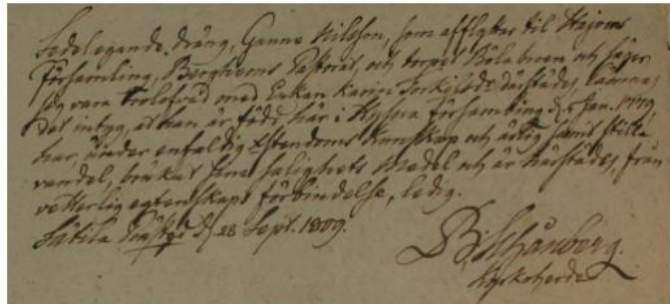
Gunne's father, Nils, survived and returned home. The military records state that for a long time, in Finland, he 'lay ill in the camp'. He was discharged as a soldier in the early 19th century. The discharge marked the beginning of a period of uncertainty for Nils and his family. As a former soldier, there was no pension and you normally had a year before you had to leave the soldier's tent and find

new accommodation. However, Nils and Lisa seem to have stayed until 1808, when Nils moved to a nearby croft. This may have been in connection with Lisa's death in the same year. But by then Gunne and his siblings had moved out.

Between 1799 and 1810 Gunne worked as a farmhand on various farms around Hyssna parish. Most boys and girls, including farm children, worked as farmhands or maids until they got married. It was hard work, but you got a small annual salary and room and board.

In a document from 1809, written by vicar Schånberg, it appears that Gunne moves to Hajom and that he is engaged to Karin Torkelsdotter:

Sedelegande dräng Gunne Nilsson, som afflyttar til Hajoms församling, Berghems Pastorat och torpet Bölabron och säger sig vara Trolofvad med Enkan Karin Torkilsdr. Därstädes, lämnas det intyg at han är född här i Hyssna församling d. 5 Jan. 1779 har under enfaldig Chtendoms Kunskap och ärlig samt stilla vandel, brukar sine salighets medel och är härstädes, från vetterlig egtenskaps förbindelse, ledig.
Sättila Prästg. d. 28 Sept. 1809 B Schånberg
Kyrkoherde



The farmhand Gunne Nilsson, who moves to Hajoms parish, Berghem pastorate and the croft Bölabron, says he is betrothed to the widow Karin Torkelsdr there. It is certified that he was born here in Hyssna parish on January 5, 1779. Has simple knowledge of Christianity and is honest and attends communion. He is available for marriage.

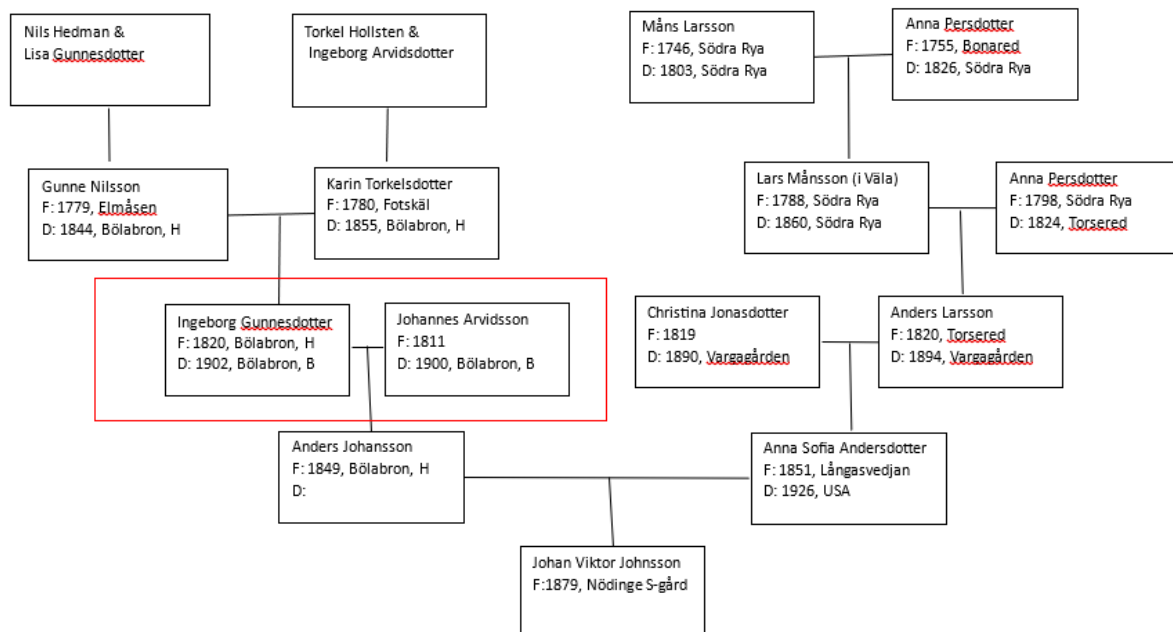
When one party died, it was common for the survivor to remarry fairly quickly. Life was hard at this time and it was difficult to manage a household as a single person. The document states that Gunne was betrothed to the widow Karin Torkelsdotter. Gunne and Karin married on March 8, 1810, when Karin brought two sons into the estate. Gunne then moved into the croft Bölabron.

Their first child, Lars, was born in October the same year. Sexual intercourse before marriage was illegal at the time and could lead to severe punishment, especially if both were married to each other. Gunne and Karin were betrothed when Lars was born and this was considered relatively mild. By law, both parties had to pay a fine of 2 daler each to the church.

Three more children were born on Bölabron, Christina b 1816, Torkel b 1818 and Ingeborg b 1820. The son Torkel dies already in 1820.

Gunne Nilsson Född 1779-01-05 i Elmåsen/Skämningareds soldattorp, Hyssna (P). Död 1846-07-05 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).	
Gift 1810-04-08 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).	Karin Torkelsdotter▲ Född 1780-06-28 i Fotskäl (P). Död 1855-04-28 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).
Lars Gunnesson Född 1810-09-30 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). Död 1854-12-31 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).▶	
Christina Gunnesdotter Född 1816-02-21 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). Död som fattighjon 1899-05-30 i Askebacka, Askersereds Storegård, Hajom (P).▶	
Torkel Gunnesson Född 1818-03-25 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). Död 1820-02-01 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).	
Ingeborg Gunnesdotter Född 1820-09-25 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). Död som utfattig 1902-11-29 i Bölabron, Backagård, Nödinge, Hajom (P).▶	

Ingeborg Gunnesdotter & Johannes Arvidsson



Gunne and Karin's youngest daughter, Ingeborg, married the shoemaker Johannes Arvidsson in 1845. The year before, Gunne has died and they move into the croft Bölabron, Hårsås. Ingeborg's brother, Lars, and his family also lived in a nearby croft.

Each parish had a parish shoemaker. He was appointed at the parish meeting, where the parish farmers, together with the priest, discussed and decided on local matters. Johannes was thus the parish shoemaker in Hajom and as such he had the exclusive right to operate in the parish.

They had four children in Bölabron and their son Anders was born in 1849.

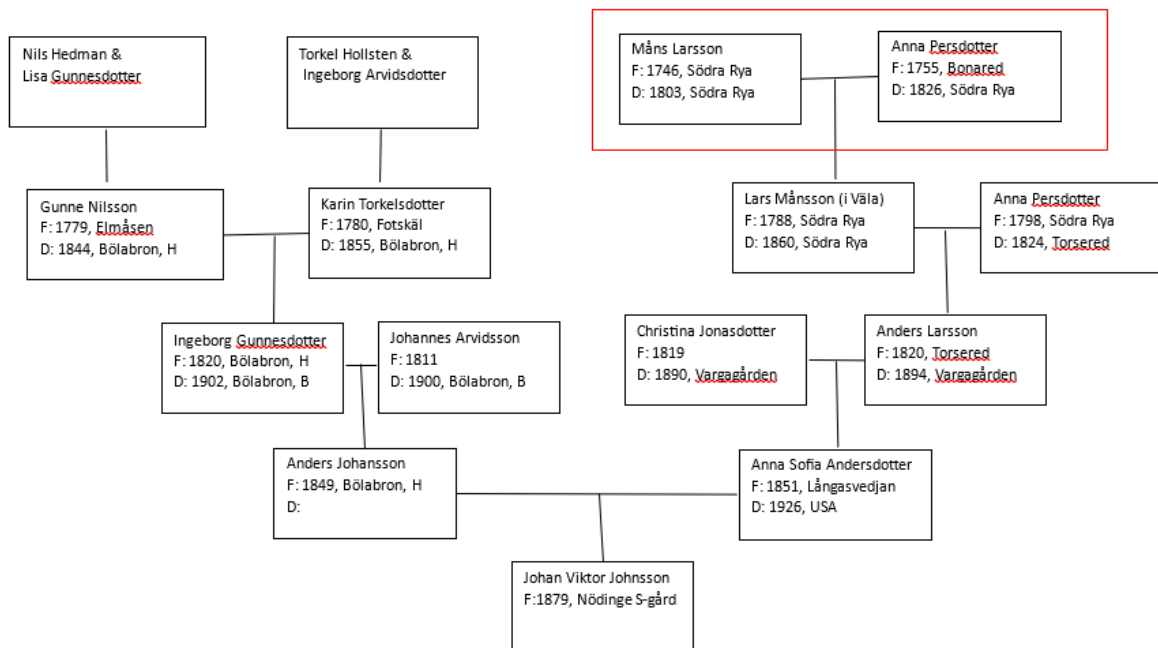
In the mid-1860s the family moved to Bölabron, Nödinge Backagård. The son Anders has left home by then, to support himself as a farmhand for a few years.

Ingeborg Gunnesdotter	
Född 1820-09-25 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). Död som utfattig 1902-11-29 i Bölabron, Backagård, Nödinge, Hajom (P).	
Gift 1845-12-29	Johannes Arvidsson Född 1811-02-06. Död 1900-07-20 i Bölabron, Backagård, Nödinge, Hajom (P). Skomakare
Gustaf Johansson Född 1846-02-03.	
Anders Johansson Född 1849-07-05 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P). ▶	
Anna Johansdotter Född 1852-10-08.	
August Johansson Född 1855-11-06.	

Anders thus works from the mid-1860s as a farmhand. According to information, he first moves to Fotskäl's parish and the next time he appears in the sources is in 1875, when he marries Anna Sofia Andersdotter from Långasvedjan in Hysna. See more about this in the next chapter.

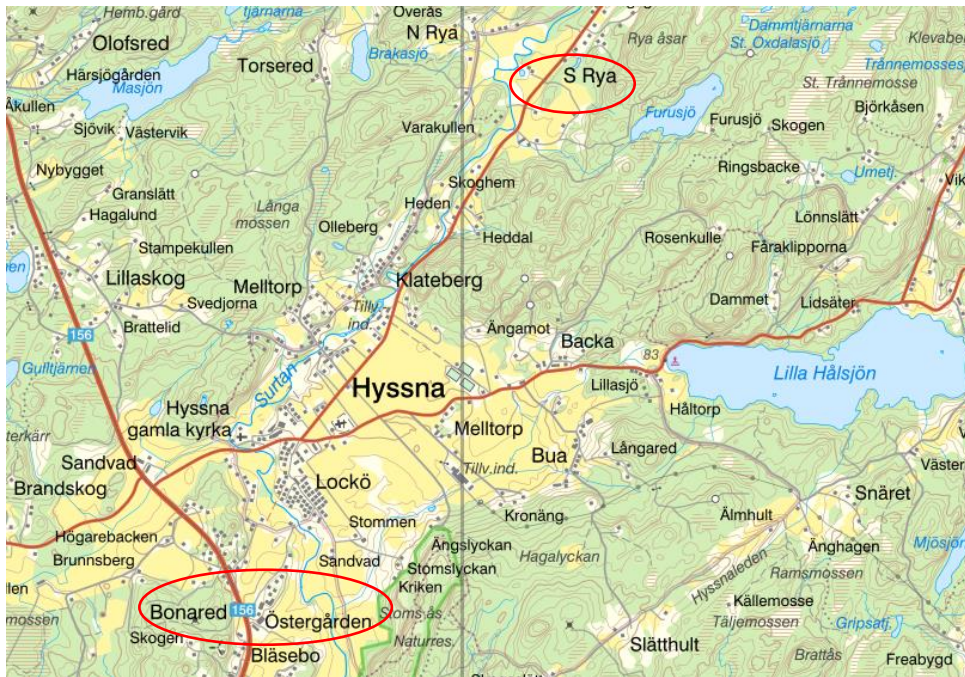
Södra Rya, Hyssna socken

Måns Larsson & Anna Persdotter



Hyssna is a neighboring parish to Hajom and Södra Rya is located in the northeast on the highway to Borås. At the end of the 18th century, Måns Larsson and Anna Pehrsdotter lived here with five children. At the time there were four farms here, so Södra Rya can be considered a small village. Måns was a self-employed farmer - his parents had previously bought the farm from the state. Måns had inherited the farm from his father, Lars Månsson, who in turn had taken over from his father.

Måns married Anna in 1781, when he was 35 years old. A rather high age for a marriage, but not particularly unusual. It was important for a farmer's son to first obtain a secure livelihood. Anna, who was born at Bonared Östergård, was a farmer's daughter. Bonared is located on the highway that runs from Hyssna south towards Hajom.



Måns Larsson Född 1746-07-24 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1803-09-07 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	
Gift 1781-11-04 i Bonared Östergård, Hyssna (P).	Anna Pehrsson Född 1755-02-05 i Bonared Östergård, Hyssna (P). Död 1826-04-01 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).
Anders Månsson Född 1782-03-26 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1845-10-10 i Bonared Mellomgård, Hyssna (P) ▶	
Anna Månsson Född 1785-10-18 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1846-12-02 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P) ▶	
Lars Månsson "i Väla" Född 1788-03-05 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1860-02-24 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P) ▶	
Pehr Månsson Född 1790-11-24 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1871-05-21 i Backa Nedergård, Hyssna (P) ▶	
Ingeborg Månsson Född 1794-01-18 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1867-04-29 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P) ▶	

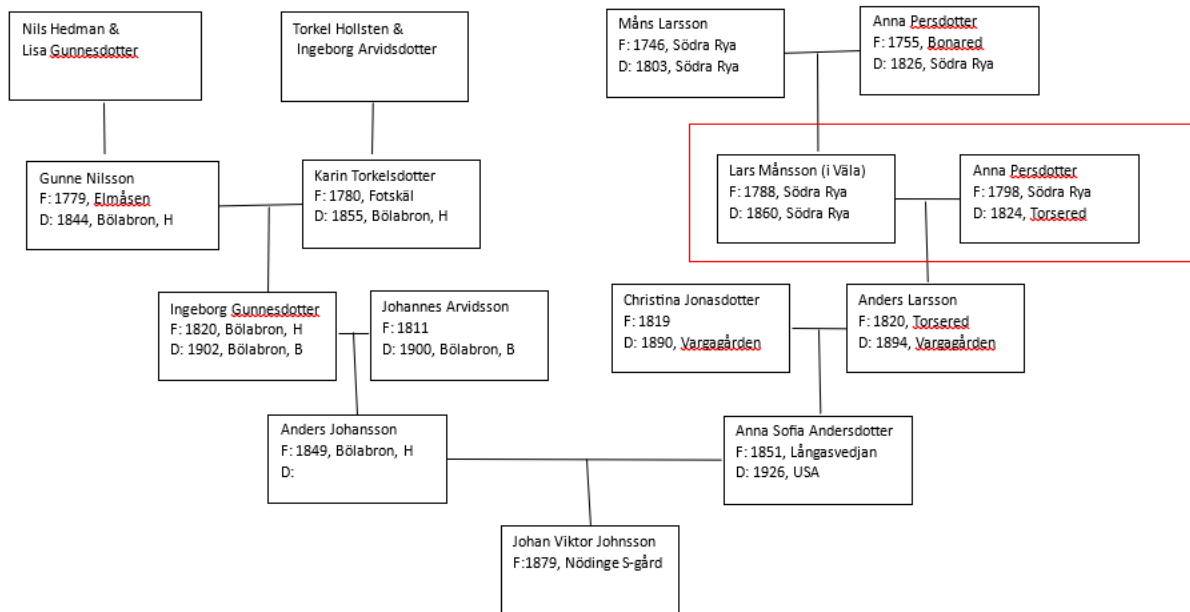
Although Måns and Anna were farmers and thus belonged to an upper class in the parish, their farm was quite small and it was difficult to survive solely on agriculture and a few animals. In the area, it was common for people to supplement their livelihood with some kind of craft. Just like his father, Måns was a carpenter and his specialty was making spinning coats.



Hyssna Old Church, where Måns and Anna were married in 1781.

Måns and Anna had five children who all lived to adulthood. Their son Lars was born in 1788.

Lars "i Väla" Månsson och Anna Persdotter



Their son Lars, born in 1788, was Måns and Anna's third child. He married Anna Persdotter in 1813. Anna, who had the same name as Lars' mother, was also born in Södra Rya so she and Lars had probably known each other since childhood.

Lars did not get to take over the farm after his parents, instead it was the youngest daughter Ingeborg. We can speculate about why this happened, but one possible explanation is that Ingeborg's marriage gave her access to more money. The eldest son taking over was probably the most common, but it was quite common for the farm to go to a daughter. For Lars and his descendants, this meant that they had to take a step down the social ladder and become crofters.

Lars seems to have been given the nickname "in Väla" early on. The background to this is said to be that he himself said he had been out and seen the world, perhaps unlike his neighbors. They are said to have called him Lars i Världen or dialectally Lars i Väla. The fact that Lars considered himself to have seen the world was based on the fact that he participated in the war against Russia in 1808-1809. Probably during that period, just like Sven Börgesson in Bölabron, he was stationed in Stockholm. These troops were not involved in any battles, but they suffered greatly from the deadly diseases that were rampant in the camps.

Lars and Anna quickly have three children, Måns, Per and Anders. The latter two were born on the Torsered farm, to which the family moved around 1817. Already in 1824, when the youngest son, Anders, was only three years old, a disaster occurred in the family. Anna, who must have been ill for a long time, dies of pulmonary tuberculosis.

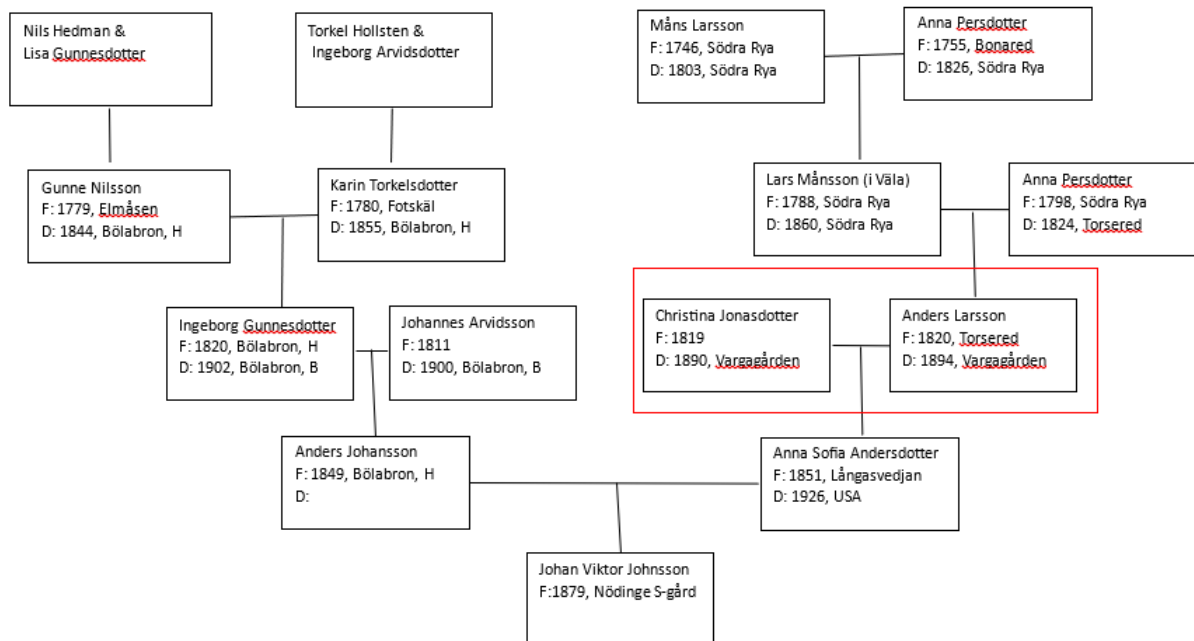
Lars Månsson "i Väla"	
Född 1788-03-05 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1860-02-24 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Svarvare	
Gift 1813-01-03 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	Anna Persdotter Född 1798-04-10 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P). Död 1824-02-17 i Torsered, Hyssna (P).
Måns Larsson Född 1815-01-05 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	
Pehr Larsson Född 1817-10-26 i Torsered, Hyssna (P).	
Anders Larsson Född 1820-12-17 i Torsered, Hyssna (P). ▶	

In the same year, Lars remarried Anna Carlsdotter and the family expanded within a few years with three more children, all born in Torsered. Lars in Väla was a "raw coat turner", i.e. he turned spinning coats like his father. Several of his male descendants have devoted themselves to this activity. Below are two spinning coats, the left one probably made by Per Larsson's son Johannes, the right one by Johannes' son Oskar.



Hyssna spinning coats, 19th century.

Anders Larsson & Christina Jonasdotter



Lars i Väla's son Anders Larsson marries Christina Jonasdotter from Södra Rya in 1842. After a few years they settle with their children at Långasvedjan. This was a croft under Södra Rya.

Anders Larsson Född 1820-12-17 i Torsered, Hyssna (P). Död 1894-08-27 i Vargagården, Hajom (P).	
Gift 1842-05-12 i Hyssna (P).	Christina Jonasdotter Född 1819-11-24. Död 1890-04-05 i Vargagården, Hajom (P).
Anna Britta Larsdotter Född 1842-12-05 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	
Johannes Andersson Född 1845-07-05 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	
August Andersson Född 1848 i Rya Sörgården, Hyssna (P).	
Anna Sofia Andersdotter Född 1851-09-13 i Långasvedjan, Rya Sörgård. Död 1926-08-20 i Michigan USA. ▶	
Anna Christina Andersdotter Född 1854-06-09 i Långasvedjan, Rya Sörgård.	
Augusta Andersdotter Född 1857-01-31 i Långasvedjan, Rya Sörgård.	

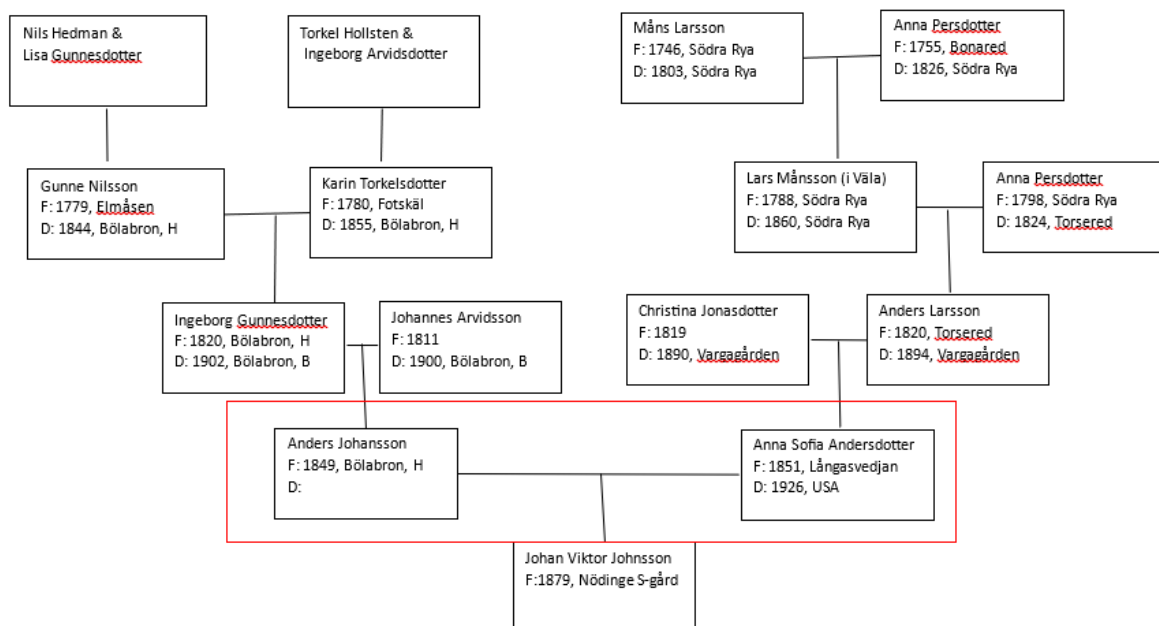
Some years after his marriage, Anders seems to have fallen foul of the law. In the church book, the priest has recorded the following:

Anders Larsson genom Bollebygds häradsrätts utslag 11/6 1847 för första resan snatteri dömd att böta 1 Rd 12 öre eller i brist därav avstraffas med 3 dagars fängelse samt undergå enskild skrift.

He is fined for minor theft. If he failed to pay the fine, he was sentenced to three days' imprisonment and a private confession (enskild skrift). The latter meant that the convicted person would be admonished individually by the priest, expressing his repentance and promising repentance.

After this event, Anders seems to have lived an orderly life. His daughter Anna Sofia was born in 1851 and the family moved in 1867 to a croft under Grönered Västergård in Hyssna.

Anders Johansson & Anna Sofia Andersdotter



The daughter Anna Sofia lives in Grönered until she marries Anders Johansson from Bølabron, Hårsås in 1875. Anders is the grandson of Gunne Nilsson and Karin Torkelsdotter.

Anders Johansson Född 1849-07-05 i Bölabron, Hårsås, Hajom (P).	
Gift 1875 i Hyssna.	Anna Sofia Andersdotter ▲ Född 1851-09-13 i Långasvedjan, Rya Sörgård. Död 1926-08-20 i Michigan USA.
Amanda Josefina Andersdotter Född 1876-01-16 i Grönered Västergård, Hyssna (P).	
Johan Viktor Andersson Född 1879-11-08 i Storegård, Nödinge, Hajom (P). ▶	
August Andersson Född 1881-11-08 i Storegård, Nödinge, Hajom (P).	

Anders and Anna Sofia's daughter Amanda was born at Grönered Västergård, but in 1878 the family moved to a croft under Nödinge Storegård in Hajom, where their son Johan Viktor was born in 1879. In connection with this, Anna Sofia's parents, Anders and Christina, moved to Vargagården in Hajom, where they spent their last years.

The later part of the 19th century was a hard time for crofters in Marks härad. Population growth had been strong for more than 50 years and there was not enough land for everyone. For a long time, many of the crofters' families had supported themselves by weaving cotton fabrics in their homes, which they then delivered to powerful buyers. At the time of the American Civil War (1861-1865), home weaving in Mark was in crisis as cotton imports were cut off. Many crofting families were particularly hard hit during this time. After the war, home weaving faced competition from factory production, which continued to make things difficult for crofters.

It is likely that Anna Sofia also found it difficult to supplement her income with home weaving. But whether it was this or general poverty and misery that made them decide to emigrate is difficult to say. By 1886, however, the decision had been made and the family said goodbye to family and friends and set off for the United States.

Many families left Sweden for the USA at this time. My (Jonny's) great-grandfather Johannes Andersson, married to Lars Gunnesson's daughter, Lotta Larsdotter, traveled to the USA himself in 1887. It is said that he worked there and sent money home so that the family could catch up. However, Lotta did not want to travel, so the family remained in Hajom. Johannes died in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1923.

Descendants of the same ancestry - Bölabron & (S Rya) (Ättlingar till samma ana)

Descendants of the same ancestry - Bölabron, Hajom				Descendants of the same ancestry - S Rya, Hyssna	
Gunne Nilsson: Nils Hedman Långberg (1747-1826 Liagärde) & Lisa Gunnarsdotter (1749-1808 Elmåsen, Hyssna) Karin Torkelsdotter: Torkel Hollsten (1751-1789 Finland) & Ingeborg Arvidsdotter (1755-?)				Måns Larsson (1746- 1803)	Måns Larsson (1746- 1803)
Gunne Nilsson (1779-1846) Karin Torkelsdotter (1780-1855)	Gunne Nilsson (1779-1846) Karin Torkelsdotter (1780-1855)	Gunne Nilsson (1779-1846) Karin Torkelsdotter (1780-1855)	Gunne Nilsson (1779-1846) Karin Torkelsdotter (1780-1855)	Lars "i Wäla" Månsson (1788-1860)	Ingeborg Månsson (1794-1867)
Lars Gunnesson (1810-1854) Anna Brita Börjesdotter (1815-1909)	Lars Gunnesson (1810-1854) Anna Brita Börjesdotter (1815-1909)	Lars Gunnesson (1810-1854) Anna Brita Börjesdotter (1815-1909)	Ingeborg Gunnesdotter (1820-1902) Johannes Arvidsson (1811-1900)	Anders Larsson (1820-1894)	Anna-Britta Eriksdotter (1836-1908)
Christina Larsdotter (1839-1910)	Christina Larsdotter (1839-1910)	Lotta Larsdotter (1849-1936)	Andrew Johnson (1849-1894) Anna Sofia Andersdotter (1851-1926) ←	Anna Sofia Andersdotter	Sofia Carlsdotter (1872-1954)
Anna Josefina Gustavsdotter (1874-1945)	Johan Adolf Gustafsson (1871-)	Ida Johannesdotter (1876-1948)	Johan Viktor Johnson (1879-1959) →		Hilda Linnéa Johansson (1907-2002) (*)
Gustaf Ring (1889-)	Erik Bertil Gustafsson (1912-)	John Olofsson (1905-1945) Hilda Linnéa Johansson (1907-2002) (*)	Lawrence Johnson (1911-1987) →		Bo Olofsson (1936-1982)
Alice Nilsson (1925-2020)	Eva Gustafsson g Peterson (1950-) ★	Bo Olofsson (1936-1982)	Joanne Bensinger (1943-) ★ →		Jonny Olofsson (1954-) ★ www.jonnyolof.se
Ingvar Nilsson (1949-) ★		Jonny Olofsson (1954-) ★ www.jonnyolof.se	Melynda Stoltzenberg (abt 1963-) ★		
Anders Nilsson (1975-) www.markanor.se					

★ = Participating in Bölabron on August 22 alt. 23 ?
(Deltar i Bölabron)

Ingeborg Gunnesdotter fanns på Bölabron, Nödinge Backagård, Skomakarns, fram till 1902

Christina Larsdotter fanns på Bölabron, Hårsås, fram till 1910

