

Peter Broberg's Biography

Source: Unknown



PETER BROBERG FAMILY
Top row: Ella (Mrs. J. A. Anderson), Elmer, Martha (Mrs. M. J. VanVorst)
Bottom row: Mr. Broberg, Eunice (Mrs. R. W. Hagemelster), Mrs. Broberg

ANDREW PETER BROBERG

On December 14, 1854, in Vårgårda, Västergötland, Sweden, a son, Andrew Peter was born to Daniel and Anna Stina Broberg. He was to become a child of destiny.

At the age of six, Peter Broberg, together with his parents and other near relatives, left their homeland and migrated to America.

After a long, stormy voyage over the Atlantic they landed in Quebec, Canada, on June 19, 1861 and from there continued their journey to New London, Minnesota. After obtaining homestead rights on land located in the West Lake area they soon had comfortable log cabins erected to provide shelter for their families before the approach of winter.

When winter arrived communication with the outside world, at times, became meager and these early pioneers had to experience and withstand many of the hardships connected with life on the frontier. Often, the stillness of the long winter nights was broken only by the sharp, prolonged barking of the lone wolf at the timbers edge, or the shrieking, howling wail of the north-wind as it piled high the new fallen snow against their cabin door.

As these hardy, industrious pioneers began to prosper and conquer the frontier they were not unmindful of their social and spirit-

ual upliftment as they gathered to render thanks to God for His Goodness and manifold blessings.

It was a pleasant summer day August 20th, 1862. Most of the season's harvest had been gathered in and a spirit of peace and contentment prevailed within this frontier settlement. All nature seemed to be in a tranquil mood. The meadow lark was singing her lays and the warbling of the 'wren was heard in the nearby thickets.

A religious service was being carried out at one of the pioneer homes a distance of about two miles from the Daniel Broberg cabin. Suddenly, the service was

interrupted and brought to a quick end as little Peter Broberg came running into the cabin, crying, and saying that some Indians had arrived at the Daniel Broberg cabin and were molesting his four year old brother and his young cousins who had been left at home.

The Indians had come to seek vengeance and to kill the white settlers whom they accused of having stolen their hunting and fishing grounds and was one of the causes for the Sioux Indian uprising that had begun a few days before in Minnesota. Of this, unfortunately, this Swedish frontier settlement had not been informed. Immediately, some of the men who were present at the services made haste on foot, by means of a short-cut through the woods towards the Broberg cabin. Daniel Broberg hitched his oxen to his wagon and started for home over a meadow trail leading around a small lake, with his wife, Anna Stina, their two sons, Peter and John, and his brother's wife and her two young children.

As Daniel Broberg, with his precious load, approached their cabins they saw the Indians standing near their cabins where they had minutes before massacred in cold blood Andrew Peter Lundborg, Johannes Nilson, a half brother of Mrs. Broberg, and four small

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children who were in the cabins. Anders, Gustav and Lars Lundborg, who had left the service and just reached their homes were also shot dead. Their younger brother, Samuel, was also shot and received a bad wound as he fell to the ground, but using his presence of mind, he pretended that he was dead, after receiving a blow delivered by the butt of the gun by one of the savages, he was taken for dead. Samuel Lundborg escaped death and lived for many years afterwards.

As the savages caught sight of the approaching wagon filled with women and children, they at once rushed towards the wagon and shot the driver, Daniel Broberg. As some of the Indians climbed on to the wagon, the two wives of the Brobergs leaped from the wagon and tried to run for safety, but were quickly caught by the savages and put to death as their heads were split open with a blow from the tomahawk. Mrs. A. P. Broberg clung on to her ten-month-old baby boy, John Albert, with a tender love implanted in a mother's heart as she strove to fight off her blood-thirsty assailants but her infant son was torn from her arms and killed by a blow of the tomahawk and then the mother suffered the same cruel fate.

The elder Lundborg, who was some distance from the cabins and whom the Reds had intended to run down and kill, succeeded in escaping death by fleeing into the nearby timber-land. Only two of the Broberg families escaped alive from the terrible scene. Anna Stina, a daughter of the A. P. Brobergs, and Peter, a son of the Daniel Brobergs. Both children had succeeded in jumping from the wagon and dashing into the nearby woods, escaping out of sight of the blood-thirsty savages and had run through the woods to a neighbor, Carl Oman, where they with fear and trembling hearts related the terrible tragedy that they had witnessed just a few minutes before. The neighbor, realizing that the savages would soon be at his door, and realizing that there was no time to escape, decided to take

refuge with his wife, his two children and Peter and Anna Stina Broberg in the cellar under his cabin. As soon as Oman had pulled down the close fitting trap door over their heads, they heard the report of guns and the smattering of bullets against the cabin wall.

After a few minutes of silence the Indians bounced into the cabin. On finding what they believed a deserted cabin, the savages started to plunder and steal what they felt would be of value to them and in their rush for loot they pushed a large wooden chest over the trap-door leading to the cellar below, concealing it and preventing them from learning of the trembling human beings below, who were awaiting death at any moment.

After the Indians had completed their plunder, they departed to rejoin their comrades, and by a miracle, the lives of those who were hiding in the cellar were spared.

A period of intense silence followed, and then feeling somewhat assured that the Indians had departed, Carl Oman carefully ventured to push open the trap-door leading to the cabin above and then cautiously stepped up from the cellar. Not seeing any Indians, he summoned all who were in the cellar, and at once decided that they should leave the cabin, and seek a hideout in the long grass in a nearby marsh.

The sun was now sinking below the Western horizon and casting its last golden rays of tender light upon the desolate homes and the terror stricken survivors as they peered out of their hide-outs, their hearts filled with agony and despair. After midnight an electrical storm with a heavy down-pour of rain drenched the survivors, adding to their misery as they lay huddled together in the wet marsh awaiting with fear and trembling that any sound reaching their ears might be the steps of some lurking savage seeking to find their hide-out and to kill them.

The following day, little Peter Broberg and his cousin, Anna Broberg, together with other survivors who had managed to escape

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the Indians took refuge on an island in a nearby lake which to this day is known as the "Isle of Refuge." As soon as the awful fate of these Swedish pioneers became known, rescue parties were sent out from neighboring communities and villages to search for survivors and bring them to safety.

Little Peter Broberg, as a result of fatigue and exposure was taken sick with typhoid fever. Friends undertook to care for him and after a slow recovery he was placed in the home of a guardian near Carver, Minnesota, who took care of him for a number of years. At the age of fourteen, Peter returned to New London to make his home with his cousin, Anna Stina (Broberg) Peterson, who had married and settled near New London. Two years later Peter moved into the village of New London where he found employment and during the winter months attended the public school. He enrolled as a member of a class of catechumens, and was confirmed in 1868 and became an active member of the Lebanon Lutheran Church. He remained steadfast in his faith and loyal to his church throughout his whole life, serving for many years as a member of the board of trustees.

Peter Broberg was a man small in stature, with a remarkable agility of body and a keen presence of mind. He had a friendly, unassuming disposition and believed in a temperate way of life and living.

In 1878 he was united in marriage to Christina Larson, the daughter of Peter Larson, one of the first settlers in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota. To this union four children were born: Ella, Martha, Eunice and Elmer. In 1878 he entered into the mercantile business in partnership with Harold Swenson, a fine young man of Norwegian extraction, establishing the firm of Swenson and Broberg. A business partnership which grew and prospered and continued to serve the New London community for a period of fifty years.

Besides being a successful merchant, Peter

Broberg found time to do much towards the betterment of his community. He was one of the organizers of the State Bank of New London, serving as the president of its board of directors for many years. He was a member of the New London Real Estate Company that built the Great Northern Hotel, a hostelry that served the community well over a long period of years. Peter Broberg also helped to promote and build the New London Flour Mill powered by the water that flowed over the harnessed waterfall. He was also interested in farming and in the improvement and development of agriculture.

During the later years of his life after he had relinquished many of his former interests he gave much of his time and effort towards the promotion and completion of undertakings that were in the public interest, he will long be remembered for his zealous efforts in bringing about the passage of a law by the Minnesota State Legislature setting aside several hundred acres of natural woodlands and meadows in the Northern part of Kandiyohi County as a game refuge for the protection of wild life within the borders of which ducks and pheasants can build their nests and the deer and other species of wild life can roam unmolested and rear their young in their natural habitats.

Peter Broberg loved nature and the great open spaces and used his influence in acquiring a large tract of land in its natural state bordering on the shores of Lake Andrew, one of Minnesota's picturesque lakes to be dedicated as a state park. Sibley State Park serves as a social and recreational center to thousands of people every year, and provides a camping ground for girl and boy scouts during the summer vacation months. Its ideal location and excellent facilities are also used by many social and religious organizations during the summer months where the members of these organizations can gather and enjoy the beauties of nature and join in a common fellowship and develop physical and moral

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strength for the more arduous duties of life. Peter Broberg, after a long and eventful life, died on December 28, 1925, and was laid to rest in the Lebanon Lutheran Cemetery at New London, Minnesota, where also the

remains of his nearest of kin, victims of the Sioux Indian Massacre rest under the monument erected to their memory by the State of Minnesota.