

The Brorström-Wennström Family in America

by Burks Oakley II
15 August 2018

Introduction

My mother was Grace Florence Brorström (1916-2000). Her paternal grandparents were Paulus* Bernhard Jacob Brorström (1859-1932) and his wife Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932). Paulus and Bernhardine were born in Sweden and immigrated to America on their honeymoon in the spring of 1882. In this narrative, I will provide some details about Paulus and Bernhardine in America, as well the first two generations of their family born in America – that is, their children and grandchildren.

Much of the following narrative was taken from a special edition of a newspaper that was published on 23 June 1991 to accompany a Brorström Family Reunion. A digitized version of this newspaper is available on the web at:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/SwedishGenealogy/PaulBrorstromNewspaperSpecial23Jun91.pdf>

The newspaper also has information about the third and fourth generations of the Brorström family in America, and if you find this narrative to be of interest, I encourage you to read the entire newspaper from cover to cover.

Brorström-Wennström in Sweden

Paulus was born in Borrby, in southeast Skåne County, and Bernhardine was born in Våxtorp, in southwest Halland County. Somehow Paulus ended up moving to the Hasslöv-Våxtorp area, where he met Bernhardine, who was living at her parents' home in Menlösa. They married on 6 March 1882, and immediately immigrated to America.



Selfie by the church in Borrby where Paulus' parents and grandparents are buried.

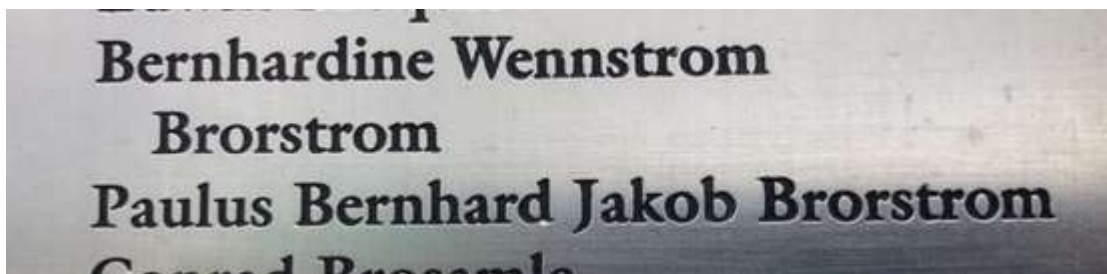


Church in Hasslöv where Bernhardine's parents are buried

Paul Brorström in America

To gain a sense of the life of this Swedish immigrant, it is instructive to construct a timeline of his life in America. I am amazed at his success. Right up front, I have to acknowledge that I know almost nothing about Bernhardine; one can only guess that she was a loving, supportive wife and mother. I apologize for not having more about her.

21 March 1882 – Paulus and Bernhardine landed in New York City. Recall that they were married on 6 March 1882, and they left for America three days later.



The names of Bernhardine Wennström Brorström and Paulus Bernhard Jakob Brorström on a plaque at Ellis Island.

1882-83 – Paulus worked for one year in the Hilbourne Roosevelt Organ Factory, East 16th St., New York City. Hilbourne Roosevelt was a cousin of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was musically and mechanically inclined and started his own company to build pipe organs.

April 1883 – Hilbourne Roosevelt sent Paulus to Poughkeepsie, New York, to be the Superintendent of the Rosedale Estate, which was the Roosevelt homestead in the Hudson Valley.

October 1891 – After eight years at the Rosedale Estate, Paul (Americanized from Paulus) took his family to live with his brother Alfred Brorström on Whitson Street in Jersey City, New Jersey. He opened a grocery store and sold it after about a year. Then Paul worked with his brother Alfred at the C.A. Woolsey Paint and Color Company in Jersey City.

Spring of 1893 – Paul began work as the Superintendent of the Gracefield Estate in Great Neck, Long Island, New York. Gracefield was the home of W.R. Grace,

who was an ex-Mayor Grace of New York City and the founder of W.R. Grace & Company.¹ Paul held this position until about 1924.



BRORSTROM FAMILY IN FRONT OF GREAT NECK HOME in 1892. This was the cottage on the Gracefield estate of William Russell Grace, an Irish immigrant who made a fortune in shipping and trading in South America. He also served as Mayor of NYC during the years 1881-1882 and 1885-1886. Gracefield, located on both sides of East Shore Road and facing Manhasset Bay, was just to the east of All Saints Church and the family walked to Sunday services across the Gracefield and MM Engnoux Estate meadows. (L to R standing) Berhnardine, Paul, baby Grace, Malte and Thure. (L to R seated) Lilian, Ebba, Alice.

[This photo might be from 1893, rather than 1892.]

26 October 1894 – Paul became a naturalized citizen of the United States in the City Court of Brooklyn.

¹ See: <https://grace.com/en-us/history>

The City Court of Brooklyn.

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF

Paul Brorstrom

To become a Citizen of the United States.

PRESENT:

Oct. 26 1894

Hon. *A. Lauwryck* JUDGE

State of New York,
COUNTY OF KINGS, ss.:
CITY OF BROOKLYN.

John Wennstrom
of *Cor 71st Street & 10th Ave* Brooklyn,

being duly sworn, says, that he is a citizen of the United States, and well acquainted with the above named applicant, and that said applicant has resided within the United States for the continued term of five years at least, next preceding this application, and within the State of New York one year at least, next preceding this application; and that during that time he has behaved as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same.

Sworn in open Court this *26* day of *October* 189*4* } *John Wennstrom*
John Anderson Clerk.

State of New York,
COUNTY OF KINGS, ss.:
CITY OF BROOKLYN.

Paul Brorstrom
of *Great Neck Long Island* Brooklyn,

do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States; and that I do absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever; and particularly to the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,

King of Sweden & Norway
of whom I was before a subject, and that I am now over twenty-one years of age.

Sworn in open Court this *26* day of *October* 189*4* } *Paul Brorstrom*
John Anderson Clerk.

The said *Paul Brorstrom* having produced such other proofs as are required by the Revised Statutes of the United States, it is ordered by the Court that he be and is hereby admitted a Citizen of the United States of America.

BY THE COURT,

John Anderson
CLERK

CITY COURT (FORMERLY MUNICIPAL COURT) BROOKLYN VOL. 64 PAGE NO 1 4 9

Paul's naturalization paper, 26 October 1894
[From the Ancestry.com website.]

Palm Sunday 1919 – Paul planted an oak sapling at Memorial Park in Great Neck, Long Island, New York, in memory of President Theodore Roosevelt, who died 6 January 1919.



Dedication of the Roosevelt Oak in Great Neck, Palm Sunday, 1919. Paul is leaning against the rock, and Bernhardine is seated to the right of the rock (when facing the photo). The oak sapling is behind Paul's right shoulder.



Stone and plaque commemorating the planting of the Roosevelt Memorial Oak.



Inscription on the plaque.

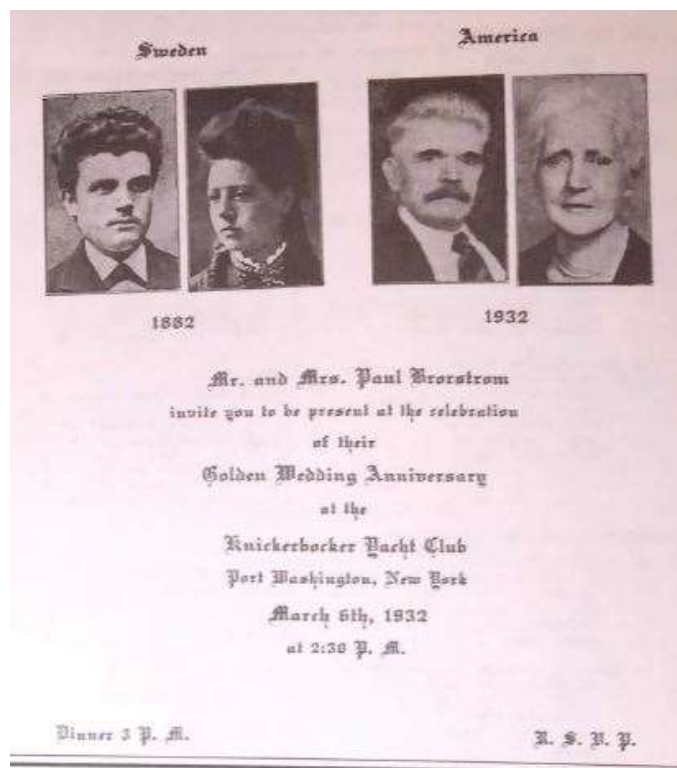
Planterad på en backa öster om och
med utsigt över Village of Great Neck
County of Nassau, Town of North Hempstead,
State of New York - U. S. of America.
600. fot öster om Hicks Lane.
Gatans namn "Memorial Street" —

Paul's writing on the back of the photo of the rock, plaque, and oak sapling. Translated to English, this reads "Planted on a hill east of, and with a sight over Village of Great Neck, County of Nassau, Town of West Hempstead, State of New York - U. S. of America. 600 feet east of Hicks Lane. The street's name is "Memorial Street". [Later renamed Hampshire Road.]

22 June 1922 – Paul and others dedicated Memorial Park in Great Neck with the Roosevelt Rocks [much more about toward the end of this narrative].



6 March 1932 – Paul and Bernhardine and their family celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the Knickerbocker Yacht Club in Port Washington, Long Island, New York.



Invitation to Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration



GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
of Paul and Bernhardine Brorstrom
at the Knickerbocker Yacht Club, Port Washington,
March 6th, 1932

Top Row —

James Horton, Malte Brorstrom, Grace Brorstrom, Charles Meunier, John (Jack) Eggers, Grace Eggers, Alice Townsend, Richard Townsend, Charles Beck, Thure Brorstrom, Paul Brorstrom

Middle Row —

Ebba Horton, Lily Meunier, Grace Brorstrom, Bernhardine Brorstrom, Paul Brorstrom, Pauline Beck, Florence Brorstrom, Paul Townsend, Richard Townsend, Jr.

Lower Row —

Bernhardine (Bernie) Meunier, Charles (Bubbe) Meunier, Charles (Gingy) Beck, Charles (Chuck) Eggers, James (Jimmy) Horton, Eunice Townsend, Bernice Townsend, Edwin Townsend, Ruth Brorstrom

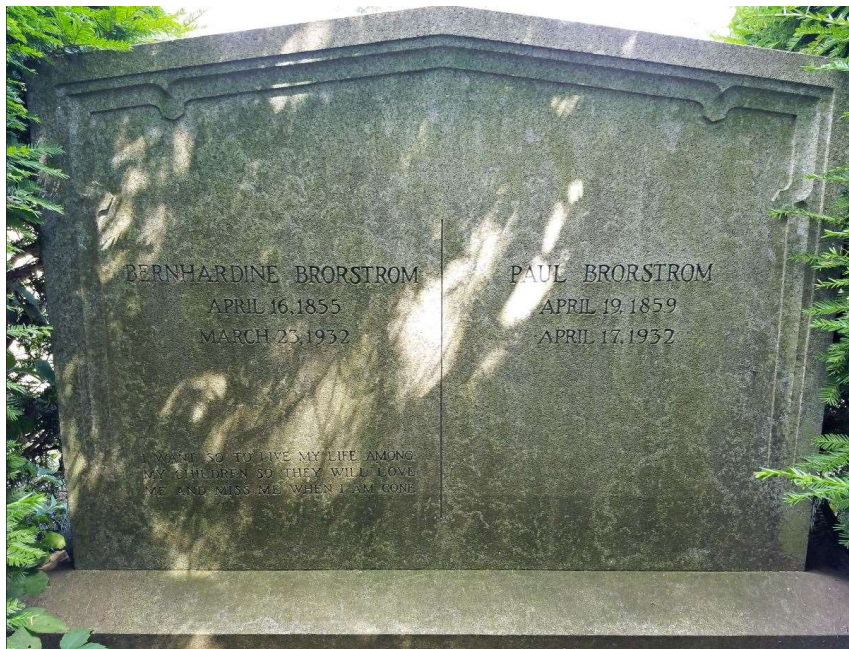
23 March 1932 – Bernhardine died in Great Neck, Long Island, New York. This was just 17 days after their 50th wedding anniversary.

17 April 1932 – Paul died in Great Neck, Long Island, New York. Amazing that just 43 days after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, both Bernhardine and Paul were deceased.

Paul and Bernhardine are buried in the Brorström family plot in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.



All Saints Church sign on Middle Neck Road, Great Neck.



The gravestone of Paul and Bernhardine, All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70662732/paulus-bernard_jacob-brorstrom

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70665289/bernhardine-brorstrom>

The First Generation Born in America

Paulus and Bernhardine had seven children, who were the first generation of the family born in America – the first two children were sons, and the last five children were daughters:

- Malte Bernhard Brorström, born 21 October 1882
- Paul Thure Brorström Sr., born 18 October 1884
- Ebba Maria Cecilia Brorström, born 6 January 1887
- Alice Bernhardine Christina Brorström, born 9 February 1889
- Lillian Alma Mathilda “Lily” Brorström, born 1 May 1891
- Grace Anna Elisabeth Brorström, born 3 July 1893
- Pauline Hanna Beata “Polly” Brorström, born 12 July 1897

My maternal grandfather (*morfar* in Swedish) was Paul Thure. I have to add that although these seven children had the family name of Brorström, they were just as much Wennström as Brorström.

Here is a photo of Paul and Bernhardine with their seven children:

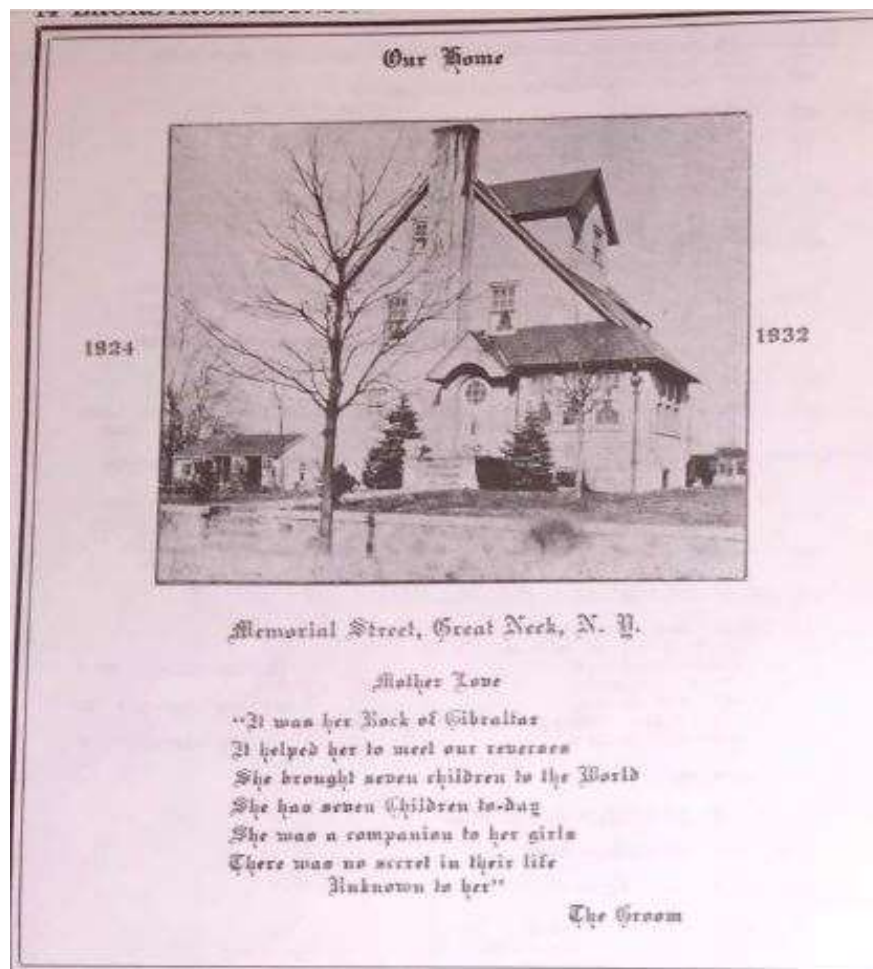


Amazing to see the family that they raised. Especially when you realize that they probably arrived in New York in March 1882 with little more than the clothes on their backs and an Amerikakoffert (literally “American trunk” – the trunk that Swedish immigrants took with them on the steamship to America):



Example of an Amerikakoffert.

The only insight I have into Bernhardine was this excerpt from the special edition of the newspaper. It has a photo of the house on Memorial Street (later renamed Hampshire Road) that Paul and Bernhardine lived in from 1924-1932, after Paul retired from his position as the Superintendent of Gracefield.



The photo is accompanied by the poem:

Mother Love

"It was her Rock of Gibraltar
It helped her to meet our reverses
She brought seven children to the World
She has seven children to-day
She was a companion to her girls
There was no secret in their life
Unknown to her"

The Groom

Now let me move on and present something about each of the seven children.

Malte Bernhard Brorström – the first son

Malte Bernhard Brorström was born on 21 October 1882 in Brooklyn, New York. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to the Rosedale Estate, the Hudson Valley estate of John Aspinwall Roosevelt, in Hyde Park/Poughkeepsie, New York. As an aside, John A. Roosevelt was the uncle of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who later became the 32nd president of the United States. After living in Poughkeepsie for eight years, the Brorström family moved to Jersey City, New Jersey, where they lived for two years. In 1893, the family moved to “Gracefield”, the estate of W.R. Grace in Great Neck, Long Island, New York, where Paul (Americanized from Paulus) served as the Superintendent of the estate. These various moves explain why the children of Paul and Bernhardine were born in different places (see below).

Malte graduated from Great Neck High School and then enlisted in the US Navy. He served on the first US submarine, the USS Holland (SS-1). He applied to enter the Naval Academy in Annapolis, but regulations at that time prohibited applications from enlisted men. Paul urged President Theodore Roosevelt to intervene with the US Navy to amend the rules. Paul’s gratitude for the actions taken by President Roosevelt prompted him to create a memorial for the president after his death [see the section about the Roosevelt Memorial Rocks.]

On 1 January 1914, Malte married Grace May Smith (1885-1957). They lived in Great Neck, very close to where Malte’s parents (Paul and Bernhardine) lived. Malte worked as a salesman. Malte and Grace had a son Bernhard Brorström, who was born on 25 December 1917 and died the same day. They had a stillborn baby in 1920. In 1933, they became foster parents to two young children.

Malte died on 25 January 1946, and Grace died in 1957. Malte and Grace May are buried in the Brorström family plot in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.



The gravestone of Malte and Grace May, All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70662035/malte-bernhard-brorstrom>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70674673/grace-may-brorstrom>

Paul Thure Brorström Sr. – the second son

Paul Thure was born on 18 October 1884 on the Rosedale Estate in Poughkeepsie, New York. After several moves with his family, he spent his teenage years on the Gracefield Estate in Great Neck, New York.

He is listed in the 1900 US Census as a 15-year old living at home in Great Neck:

1900 United States Federal Census for Paul Thuse Brorstrom
New York > Nassau > North Hempstead > District 0714

Name	Relation to Head	Race	Sex	Birth Month	Birth Year	Age	Marital St	Years Mar	Children	Children
Brorstrom Paul Th. Sr.	Head	W	M	Apr.	1859	41	M	19		
" Bernhardt	Wife	W	F	Apr.	1853	45	M	19	7	7
" Paul Thuse	Son	W	M	Oct.	1884	15	S			
" Elna M. G.	Daughter	W	F	Jan.	1887	13	S			
" Ailie B. G.	Daughter	W	F	Feb.	1889	11	S			
" Lilly A. M.	Daughter	W	F	May	1891	9	S			
" Grace A. E.	Daughter	W	F	July	1893	6	S			
" Pauline H. B.	Daughter	W	F	July	1897	2	S			

On 21 June 1911, Paul Thure married Edna Florence Larsson (1889-1966), who was also a first-generation Swedish-American. They made their home in Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York.

Paul Thure Brorström Sr. and his wife Edna Florence Larsson had three children:

- Paul Thure Brorström Jr. (1913-2001)
- Grace Florence Brorström (1916-2000)
- Ruth Ida Brorström (1922-2003)

Grace Florence was my mother.

Paul Thure worked all his adult life for Ingersoll-Rand, a company with its headquarters at 11 Broadway in Manhattan. Ingersoll-Rand was one of the country's largest manufacturers of mining and construction machinery. He worked his way up to Assistant Sales Manager for the entire company. Paul Thure was very active in the Masonic Lodge.

As mentioned above, the Brorström family celebrated the 50th wedding anniversary of Paul and Bernhardine on 6 March 1932 at the Knickerbocker Yacht Club in Port Washington, Long Island, New York. On 23 March 1932, just a few weeks later, Bernhardine died, and on 17 April 1932, less than a month after her death, Paul died. The sudden loss of his parents, plus the financial pressures of the Great Depression, proved to be too much for Paul Thure.

Hunt Missing Pleasantville Man.
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
PLEASANTVILLE, N. Y., May 12.
—A police alarm was broadcast today for Paul Thure Brorstrom, 48 years old, who has been missing since Monday. He carried several hundred dollars it is said. Mr. Brorstrom was said to have been brooding over the loss of his parents several months ago. The alarm was sent out on information supplied by M. B. Brorstrom of Great Neck, L. I., brother of the missing man.

Missing Man Found a Suicide.
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
PLEASANTVILLE, N. Y., May 13.
—Paul Thure Brorstrom, 48 years old, a former sales executive of the Ingersoll-Rand Company of New York, who disappeared from his home here on Monday, was found dead from monoxide gas this morning in the garage at the rear of his home, on Tarrytown Road. The police said the recent death of his mother and financial worries caused him to take his life.

His wife Edna and their children continued to live in the family home in Pleasantville. Ruth married in 1946, and around 1950, she and her young family

returned to Pleasantville to live in the family home and care for Edna. Edna died on 6 January 1966, having lived as a widow for more than 33 years.

Paul Thure Brorström Sr. and his wife Edna Florence Larsson Brorström are buried in Kensico Cemetery, in Valhalla, New York. Also buried in the family plot are Edna's parents, Lars Emil Larsson and Ida Gustava Larsson, who were Swedish immigrants, as well as Ruth Ida Brorström Nathe and her husband Raymond J. Nathe.



The Brorström-Larsson-Nathe plot in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York.



Paul Thure Brorström Sr.'s gravestone in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York.



Edna Florence Larsson Brorström's gravestone in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/67676682/paul-thure-brorstrom>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/92569100/edna-florence-brorstrom>

Much more information about Paul Thure Brorström Sr. can be found in Appendix A.

Ebba Maria Cecilia Brorström – the first daughter

Ebba Maria Cecilia Brorström was born on 6 January 1887 in Poughkeepsie, New York. As mentioned above, the family moved several times, eventually settling at Gracefield, in Great Neck, Long Island, New York, in 1892. Ebba graduated from Great Neck High School.

In the early 1910's, Ebba lived in New York City and worked as a seamstress. On 29 December 1923, she married James Cornell Horton Sr. (1888-1948), after a long engagement.

Ebba and her husband James had a son, James Cornell Horton Jr., who was born on 18 October 1924. He died 6 April 2004. James Jr. and his wife Elizabeth had seven children and they have many descendants.

Ebba and James were active in Eastern Star, the Masonic Order, the Flower Hill Hose Company (a volunteer fire department), and the Republican Party. They joined the Knickerbocker Yacht Club, and in 1936, they moved to the Beacon Hill area of Port Washington, New York.

During World War II, Ebba was a leader in bond drives and in the Red Cross. James Sr. died from a sudden heart attack on 8 March 1948. Ebba lived alone and remained socially active; she loved to play bridge. She died on 4 April 1967.

Ebba and James Sr. are buried in the Brorström family plot in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.



The Horton gravestone in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70675856/ebba-m.c.-horton>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70675878/james-c.-horton>

Alice Bernhardine Christina Brorström – the second daughter

Alice Bernhardine Christina Brorström was born 9 February 1889 in Poughkeepsie, New York. She moved to Great Neck with her family in 1893. She graduated from Great Neck High School in 1903.

On 25 November 1916, she married Richard Edwin Townsend Sr. (1884-1950). Richard was the scion of a family that had lived in Port Washington, Long Island, New York, for generations. They had six children:

- Richard Edwin Townsend Jr. (1917-2009)
- Paul Brorström Townsend (1919-2005)
- Alice Bernice Townsend (1920-2011)

- Edwin Daniel Townsend (1922-1975)
- Daniel Grant Townsend (1927-1927)
- Eunice Grace Townsend (1928-2003)

Alice was an outstanding distance swimmer, having made the Kings Point to Port Washington crossing several times. She went scuba diving in the Bahamas at age 67, descending to 60 feet. She ran the Public Service Garage on Main Street in Port Washington for 52 years. Quite a woman!!

Alice was a fixture of life in her community. She was one of the founders of North Shore Hospital and served as the President of the Port Washington chapter of United Cerebral Palsy. She was active in Eastern Star. She was honored in 1967 as North Hempstead Town's "outstanding senior citizen" for her volunteer work.

Richard Townsend died in June 1950, and Alice died on 14 November 1972. They are buried in the Townsend plot in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Port Jefferson, Long Island, New York.



The Townsend gravestone in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Port Jefferson.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13088560/alice-b-townsend>

Lillian Alma Mathilda “Lily” Brorström – the third daughter

Lillian Alma Mathilda “Lily” Brorström was born on 1 May 1891 in Jersey City, New Jersey. As a child, she lived with her parents at Gracefield. On the nearby Eldrige Estate, Clemence Meunier, a French immigrant, was the chief housekeeper. She brought her half-brother, Charles Alexander Meunier Sr. (1888-1966), from France to Great Neck at the age of 17. Lillian and Charles met while he was in the big house at Gracefield fixing something. They were married in All Saints Church in Great Neck on 17 September 1914, and lived in a house on Hicks Lane, which Charles had built before their marriage. Charles and Lily adopted two children, Bernhardine Meunier (1922-2015) and Charles Alexander Meunier Jr. (1925-1990).

Charles and his brother-in-law Charles Eggers went into business producing metal gutters and hacksaws, but they had to close the business due to the shortage of metal during WWII.

Eventually Lillian and her family ended up living at 115 Hampshire Road, adjacent to where the original Roosevelt Memorial had been located.

In his later years, Charles had a fix-it shop at 778 Middle Neck Road, which was very successful. Lily worked side-by-side with Charles, and their shop was featured in the *Readers Digest* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. After 12 years in the fix-it shop, they retired to a three-acre farm in Barnstead, New Hampshire. They had six wonderful years there. Lillian died in Boston, Massachusetts, on 19 September 1965, and Charles died in Concord, NH, in March 1966.

Lily and Charles are buried in the Brorström plot in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.



The Meunier gravestone in All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70676221/lillian-a.m.-meunier>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70676376/charles-a.-meunier>

Their son Charles Jr. and his wife also are buried in the plot next to Charles Sr. and Lillian.



Grave marker of Charles Meunier Jr.



Grave marker of Charles' wife, Margaret Meunier.

Grace Anna Elisabeth Brorström – the fourth daughter

Grace Anna Elisabeth Brorström was born 3 July 1893 on the Gracefield Estate in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.

On 20 December 1920, Grace married John Henry “Jack” Eggers (1894-1967) in Santiago, Chile. Jack was working in Chile as an accountant for the W.R. Grace & Co. Steamship Lines. While in Chile, they had two sons:

- John Paul Eggers (1919-1920)
- Charles Edward “Chuck” Eggers (1922-1984)

Six months after Charles was born, the family moved back to Great Neck. They first lived with Paul and Berhardine at the family home on Memorial Street (later renamed Hampshire Road), and then moved to a house up the street.

Grace was active at the All Saints Church in Great Neck. Jack died in 1967 and Grace died in 1969. They are buried in the Brorström family plot in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York.

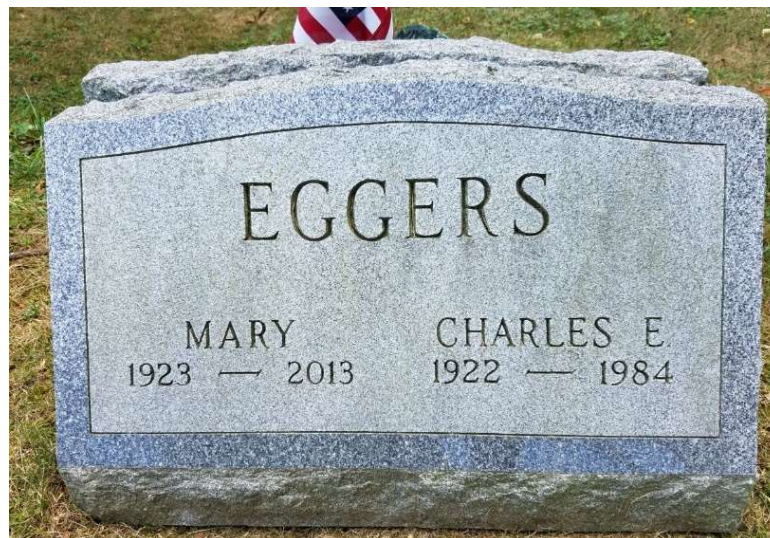


The Eggers gravestone in All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70675183/grace-a.e.-eggers>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70675196/john-h.-eggers>

Grace and Jack's son Charles is buried there, along with his wife.



Gravestone of Charles and Mary Eggers in All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

Their daughter, Judy Eggers Gran (1945-2003), is also buried there.



Gravestone of Judy Eggers Gran in All Saints Cemetery, Great Neck.

As an aside, Mary Nangle Eggers and Margaret Nangle Meunier were twin sisters, who married cousins in the Brorström family.

As another aside, I always thought that Grace Brorström, who was born on the Gracefield Estate in 1893, was named after the owner of the estate. And my mother, Grace Florence Brorström, always said that she was named after her Aunt Grace. So I have a special connection to my Great-Aunt Grace and the Grace estate.

Pauline Hanna Beata "Polly" Brorström - the fifth daughter

Pauline Hanna Beata "Polly" Brorström was born on 12 July 1897 in Great Neck, Long Island, New York, the seventh and last child of Paul and Bernhardine. While living at Gracefield, Polly was employed in New York City as an artist. In 1921, she married Charles F. Beck Sr. (1890-1985), and they immediately moved to Valparaiso, Chile, where Charles was an accountant for the W.R. Grace company.

They had one child, Charles F. Beck Jr. (1923-?), who was born in Chile. Popular place for the Brorström sisters....

Polly and Charles returned to the States in 1924 and finally settled in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, in 1928. When Charles retired from W.R. Grace in 1955, they moved to Palm Springs, California. Polly took up desert landscape painting and completed about 20 canvases.

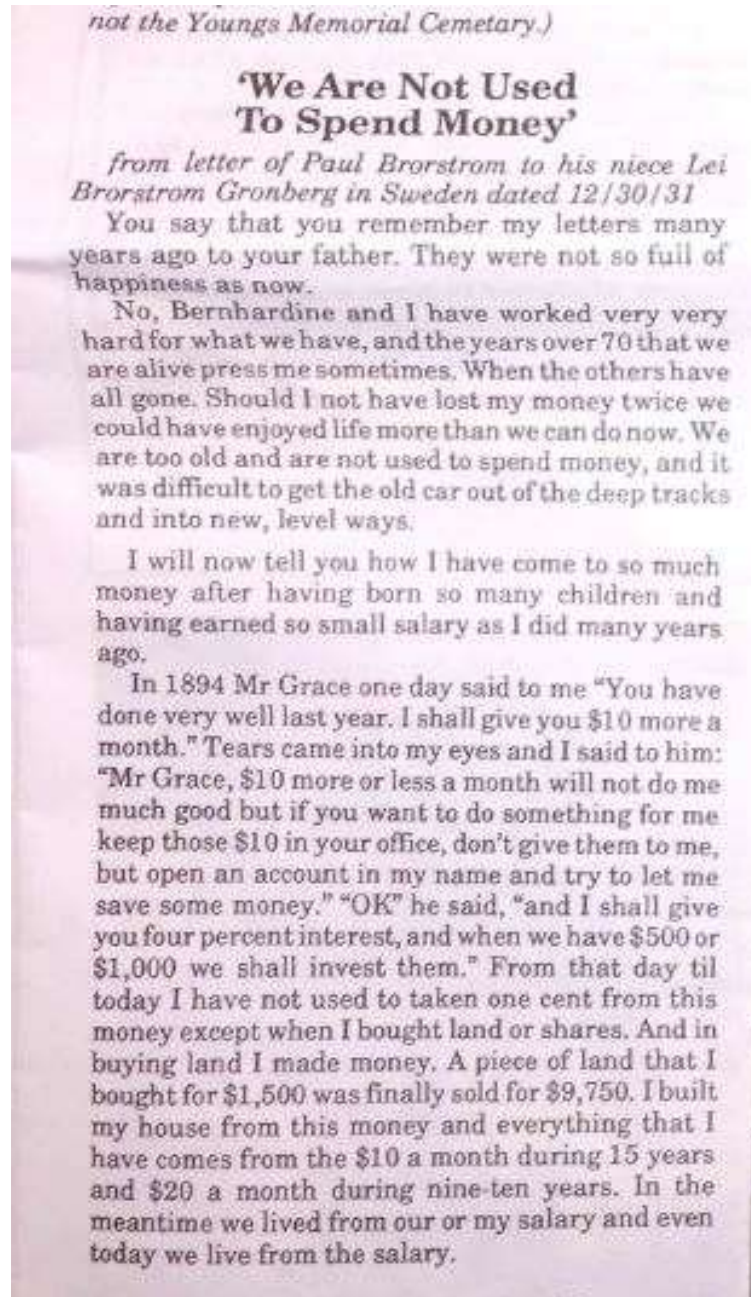
Charles died in 1985, and Pauline died on 2 July 1986 in Riverside, California.

Here is a photo of the three youngest Brorström girls:



Insight into Paul's Success in America

I don't have any original papers of Paul Brorström, but this excerpt from the special edition of the newspaper in 1991 is quite telling:



Amazing that he had the foresight and character to ask his boss to save the \$10 extra per month during his first 15 years of employment (\$20 extra in the last 9-10 years) and invest it on his behalf. And that gave him the financial means to build a nice house and care for his family.

Paul Brorström & the Roosevelt Memorial Rocks

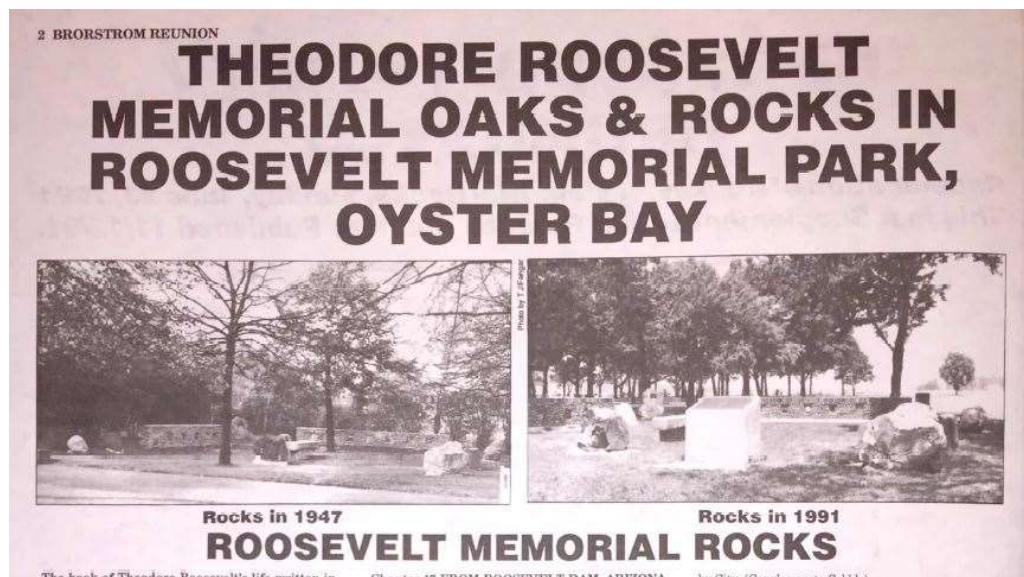
Now I'll finally get around to the rocks. Paul Brorström wanted to honor President Theodore Roosevelt. So he decided to assemble a collection of rocks that represented key stages in Roosevelt's life. Originally, the rocks were in a park near Paul's house in Great Neck. The memorial rocks were dedicated in 1922.



In 1947, the collection was moved to a city park near the water in Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York. This location is about 3 miles from Theodore Roosevelt's home on Sagamore Hill.

From Wikipedia: "The Theodore Roosevelt Monument Assemblage is a collection of 24 stones and plaque located in the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park in Oyster Bay, New York. The stones and other objects are meant to each represent a "chapter" and together form a "book" telling the story of Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States."

The second-generation born in America (my mother's generation) organized a rededication of the memorial in Oyster Bay on 23 June 1991 (which happened to be my mother's 75th birthday).



The full text of the plaque from the 1991 rededication follows, with description of the monument as a whole and individual objects and stones:

ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL ROCKS

The Book of Theodore Roosevelt's Life Written in Rocks

Chapter 1. Born Oct. 27, 1858. Brick from 28 E 20 NYC Where Roosevelt was born. Presented by Women's Roosevelt Memorial Assn.

Chapter 2. Regaining his health granite step from house at Moosehead Lake, Maine, where young Roosevelt regained his health.

Chapter 3. From Cambridge, Mass. Theodore Roosevelt's four years of college life. Presented by Harvard College.

Chapter 4. Baptismal in politics slate from Morton Hall, NYC. 21st District Republican Assembly Hall. Presented by family of Joe Murray.

Chapter 5. Assemblyman stone from Albany where Roosevelt entered government. Presented by City of Albany.

Chapter 6. Theodore Roosevelt in cowboy land. Boulder from Elkhorn Ranch, North Dakota. Presented February 1924 by Village of Medora.

Chapter 7. Civil Service commissioner of NYC stone from Roosevelt House. Presented by Police Captain Edward J. Bourke.

Chapter 8. Police Commissioner of NYC brick from Mulberry Street Station where Roosevelt made history. Presented by Mrs. Jacob Riis.

Chapter 9. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Boulder from Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. Presented by the city.

Chapter 10. Rough Riders to Victory boulder from San Juan Hill. Presented by J. Louis Shaefer.

Chapter 11. Governor of New York State stone from Camp Black in Montauk Point where he agreed to run for governor. Presented by the Town of North Hempstead.

Chapter 12. Reconstruction of the barge canals boulder from the Erie Canal in Herkimer. Presented by NY State Engineers office.

Chapter 13. Home of Theodore Roosevelt boulder from Sagamore Hill. Presented by Mrs. Edith Roosevelt.

Chapter 14. Vice President of the United States stone from the Philadelphia home where he was nominated Vice President. Presented by the city.

Chapter 15. From the Adirondacks where Theodore Roosevelt was when he became President of the United States. Presented August 1921 by P. Thure Brorstrom. [Note that this was my maternal grandfather, Paul Thure Brorström.]

Chapter 16. Oath of office 1901 stone from Wilcox House, Buffalo, where he took the oath of office. Presented by James W. Dowsey.

Chapter 17. From Roosevelt Dam, Arizona. President Roosevelt preservation of the natural resources of the nation. Presented by City of Roosevelt, Arizona.

Chapter 18. The big coal strike piece of coal from the Pennsylvania anthracite mines where he conquered the strike. Presented by Gov. Gifford Pinchot.

Chapter 19. Greatest acquirement boulder from Culebra Cut Panama Canal. Presented by Mrs. Lillius Grace.

Chapter 20. Russo-Japanese War boulder from Portsmouth, N.H., where he settled the war. Presented by city.

Chapter 21. A native rock Theodore Roosevelt in his big stick and square deal. Presented August 1923 by city.

Chapter 22. Battle fleet round world 7 inch shell from US Navy, for his biggest peace move. Presented by M. B. Brorstrom. [Note that this was my Great-Uncle, Malte B. Brorström.]

Chapter 23. Author and man bronze book representing the life of Theodore Roosevelt as author of 31 books. Presented by Mrs. Lillian Tatters Bussenius.

Chapter 24. Died January 6th 1919. 60 years, 2 months and 9 days.

Dedicated in Great Neck June 10, 1922

Rededicated when moved to Oyster Bay Oct. 25, 1947

Rededicated with this plaque June 23, 1991

Close-up of some of the words from my photos

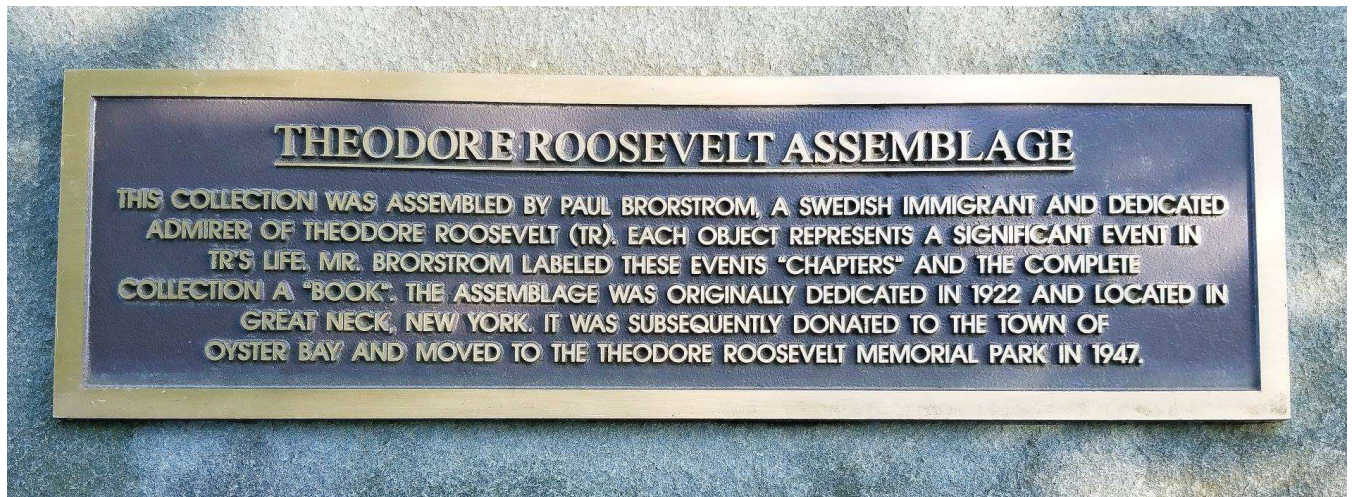
I visited the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park in Oyster Bay, New York in July 2018 – here are some photos I took:



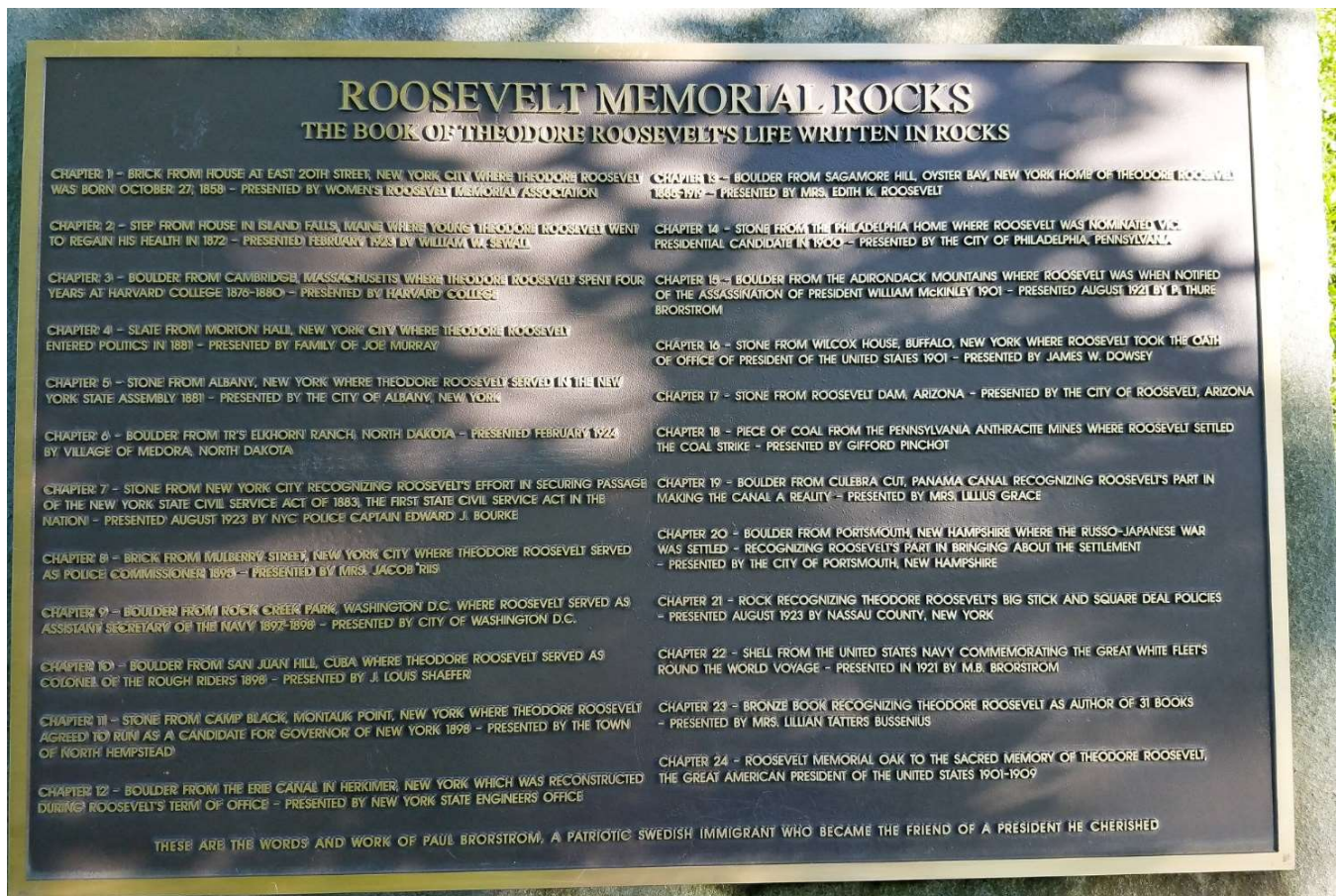
The sign at the entrance to the park.



The plaque at the entrance to Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Area.



The plaque on the main rock in the Memorial.



The main plaque at the Memorial, describing all the rocks.



The words on the bottom line of the main plaque: "These are the words and work of Paul Brorström, a patriotic Swedish immigrant who became the friend of a President he cherished."



The Roosevelt Memorial Assemblage.



The plaque on the rock - from Palm Sunday, 1919.



A close-up of the plaque from Palm Sunday, 1919.



A rock presented by my grandfather, P. Thure Brorström.



Selfie at the Memorial.

Summary

In this lengthy narrative, I have attempted to provide an overview of the life of Paul Brorström and his wife Bernhardine Wennström Brorström after they immigrated to America in 1882. As I have tried to bring all this together, I am amazed at how successful this immigrant family was – the accomplishments of the first two generations born in America – how they integrated and assimilated and became a successful American family. Imagine starting in a new country with nothing, and 50 years later having so much to be proud of.

Appendix A – More about Paul Thure Brorstrom Sr. (1882-1932)

After my mother, Grace Florence Brorström Oakley, died in 2000, her obituary appeared in the Quincy *Herald-Whig* newspaper and on her funeral home's website.² The obituary mentioned her father, Paul Thure Brorström Sr., her older brother Paul Thure Brorström Jr., as well as me. This meant that anyone searching online for Paul Thure Brorström would find me. And within a few months, I was contacted by Sue Hawes, of Portland, Maine. Sue's grandmother worked for Paul Thure Sr. in New York City, and Sue can't say enough good things about the man.

On the Find-A-Grave website,³ Sue wrote:

Paul Thure Brorstrom holds a special place in Byrne family history though we are unrelated. The words below from an article featuring Mr. Brorstrom and saved by my grandparents ring true, Mr. Brorstrom worked to "promote the interests...of the opposite sex..." He was the supervisor of my grandmother, Margaret Ferguson, when she became engaged to another Ingersoll Rand employee, Terry Byrne, my grandfather. In those days, a woman who married had to leave her job. Mr. Brorstrom kept mum, the story goes, until the couple was ready. For a wedding gift, the Brorstrom family gave the couple a beautiful crystal vase that is still in the family.

² <http://www.hansenspear.com/obituary/grace-brorstrom-oakley/>

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/67676682/paul-thure-brorstrom>

Sue also posted an article from a Masonic magazine:

[BEGIN MASONIC ARTICLE]

THE FOREWORD, date unknown, page 28

P. Thure Brorstrom

Bro. P. Thure Brorstrom, Grand Director of Ceremonies and Past Master of Pleasantville Lodge, 880, was born in 1884 in the little village of Great Neck, L. I., only twenty miles from the roar of the great metropolis, of parents whose staunch belief in the sacred principles of liberty and justice for all created a home atmosphere which contributed largely to a desire to seek further into the great mysteries of life. His father and brothers holding memberships in Morton Lodge, 63, of Hempstead, it was but natural that he should likewise endeavor to gain admittance to the same Lodge, in which he was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on November 27, 1911. During that year he visited Pleasantville and met one of its talented young ladies, whose charms soon caused him to move to the Hills of Westchester.

On February 14, 1912, Bro. Brorstrom affiliated with Pleasantville Lodge, and for a period of tell years proved his worth by living and acting as a good Mason and true. In 1922, he was rewarded by being appointed Junior Deacon of his Lodge and by virtue of his ability and popularity made rapid strides toward the East, so that in 1925 he was elected and served as Master of the Lodge. In the following year he was appointed by Harold J. Richardson to the office of Grand Director of Ceremonies, Grand Lodge of the State of New York. In addition to this, Bro. Brorstrom had in the meantime become a member of Buckingham Chapter, 174, Royal Arch Masons as well as Westchester Commandery, 42, Knights Templar, both of Ossining.

It is not recorded in history to any appreciable extent that men who have devoted their time and energy to accomplishing a man's task have found time to promote the interests of organizations of the opposite sex contrary to this axiom, Bro. Brorstrom in 1922 was singled out from many other favorable prospects and elected Patron of Pleasantville Chapter, 546, Order of the Eastern Star, and served in that capacity during the years 1923 and 1924, but due to his being made Master of his Lodge in 1925, the Chapter

was compelled to relinquish their claim on him for that year. However, he was re-elected for the year 1926 and served until March 1927 when his successor was installed, thus giving Bro. Brorstrom more time to devote to the development of his business.

Bro. Brorstrom started his business career in July, 1901, entering the service of the Ingersoll Rand Company at 11 Broadway, New York City, as an office boy and by diligent application of his time to the affairs of his employers for a period of 25 years was rewarded by continued advancement until in 1924, he was appointed Manager of the Portable Compressor Sales Department of the New York district, which position he still holds.

During the year 1918 Bro. Brorstrom entered the business of "Making Acres into Plots" at Pleasantville, devoting his spare time to the development of this new enterprise. This has proven most successful. At the present time he is engaged in the development of Pinecliff at Chappaqua, Lake Pleasant and Birchwood at Pleasantville, which are destined to become charming residential sections of these two villages.

Brother Brorstrom's home at Pleasantville is most ideal, being located directly opposite Lake Pleasant amongst beautiful shade trees, and having three acres laid out in gardens, fruit orchards and pastures, two Guernsey cows, and several hundred chickens doing their share to sustain the inner man.

[END MASONIC ARTICLE]

Finally, Sue added:

As of August 2013, it became evident that PTB was likely re-interred with his wife at Kensico Cemetery. Confirmation is being sought from the Kensico Cemetery but the now living relatives only are aware of his burial in Kensico. The source for his burial at All Saint's Cemetery in Great Neck with his parents came from his death notice, published on Apr 20, 1932 in the New York Times, page 23.