

In Search of the Descendants of My Great-Aunt Lillian Brorström Meunier

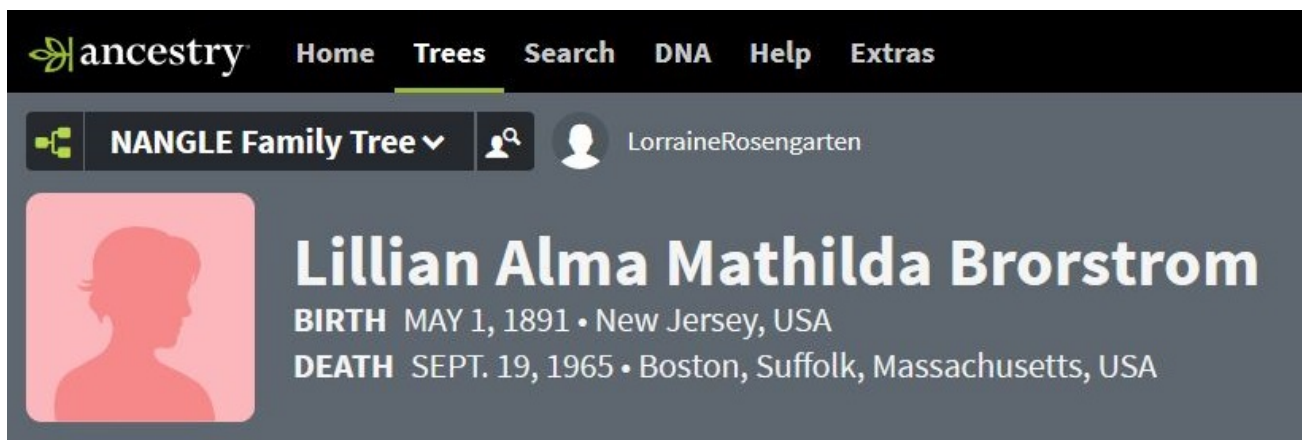
by Burks Oakley II
7 August 2018

Introduction

My mother's four grandparents immigrated to America from Sweden in the 1880's. Two of them, Paulus Brorström (1859-1932) and Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932), came to America shortly after they married in 1882. They had seven children – first they had two sons, who in turn were followed by five daughters. My *morfar* (Swedish for mother's father), Paul Thure Brorström Sr. (1884-1932), was the second son. The five daughters (in birth order) were: Ebba, Alice, Lillian, Grace, and Pauline.

In my quest to learn more about my Swedish-American cousins who are descended from the Brorström-Wennström immigrant couple, I decided to search for my Great-Aunt (technically Grand-Aunt) Lillian Brorström in family trees on the Ancestry.com. I reasoned that if I could find Lillian in a family tree, then I could see if she had any children and grandchildren – and perhaps find a living relative of this branch of our family.

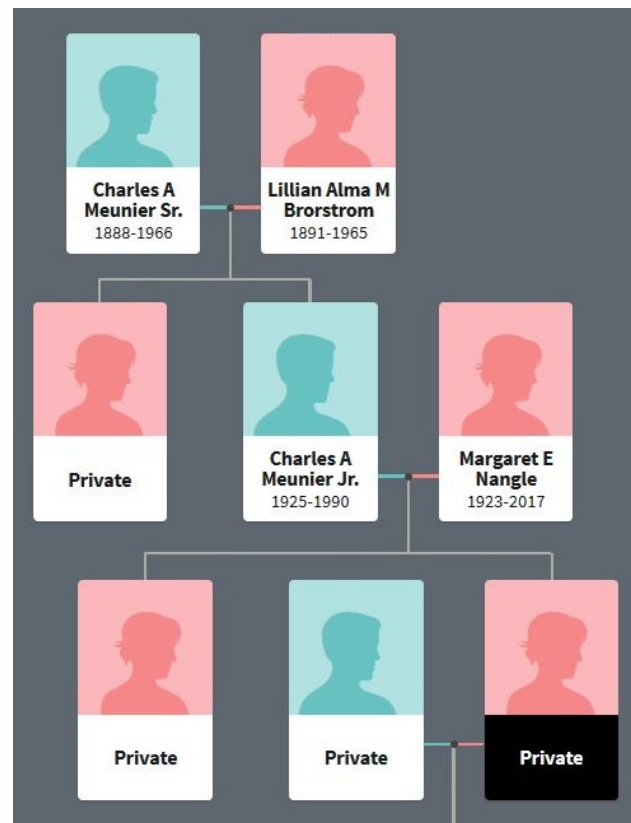
I searched family trees on the Ancestry.com website for Lillian Brorström (1891-1965) and I found her in the NANGLE Family Tree, managed by a woman having the username on Ancestry.com of *LorraineRosengarten*:



The image is a screenshot of the Ancestry.com website. At the top, the Ancestry logo is on the left, and navigation links for Home, Trees, Search, DNA, Help, and Extras are on the right. Below the navigation bar, there is a dark grey header for the 'NANGLE Family Tree' with a dropdown arrow, a search icon, and a user profile icon for 'LorraineRosengarten'. The main content area features a red silhouette of a woman's head and shoulders on the left. To the right of the silhouette, the name 'Lillian Alma Mathilda Brorstrom' is displayed in large white text. Below the name, her birth information is listed: 'BIRTH MAY 1, 1891 • New Jersey, USA' and her death information: 'DEATH SEPT. 19, 1965 • Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, USA'.

I assumed that her real name is also Lorraine Rosengarten.

The NANGLE Family Tree on Ancestry.com showed that Lillian and her husband Charles A. Meunier Sr. (1888-1966) had a son Charles A. Meunier Jr. (1925-1990), who married Margaret E. Nangle (1923-2017):



Furthermore, this tree shows that Charles Jr. and his wife Margaret had two daughters, and since they are labelled “Private”, they are still living.

Yes! It appears that my great-aunt Lillian Brorström does indeed have two living granddaughters. OK, how to go about finding them, if I don't even know their names? I decided to contact Lorraine Rosengarten directly, and ask her if she knew either of these women. So on 21 May 2017, I sent her a detailed note using the Ancestry.com messaging system. I asked her to pass along my e-mail address to either of these women and ask them to contact me. In my note, I mentioned that I was also on Facebook. Before the end of the day, I received a Facebook friend request from Joanne Meunier Locke, along with a FB message:

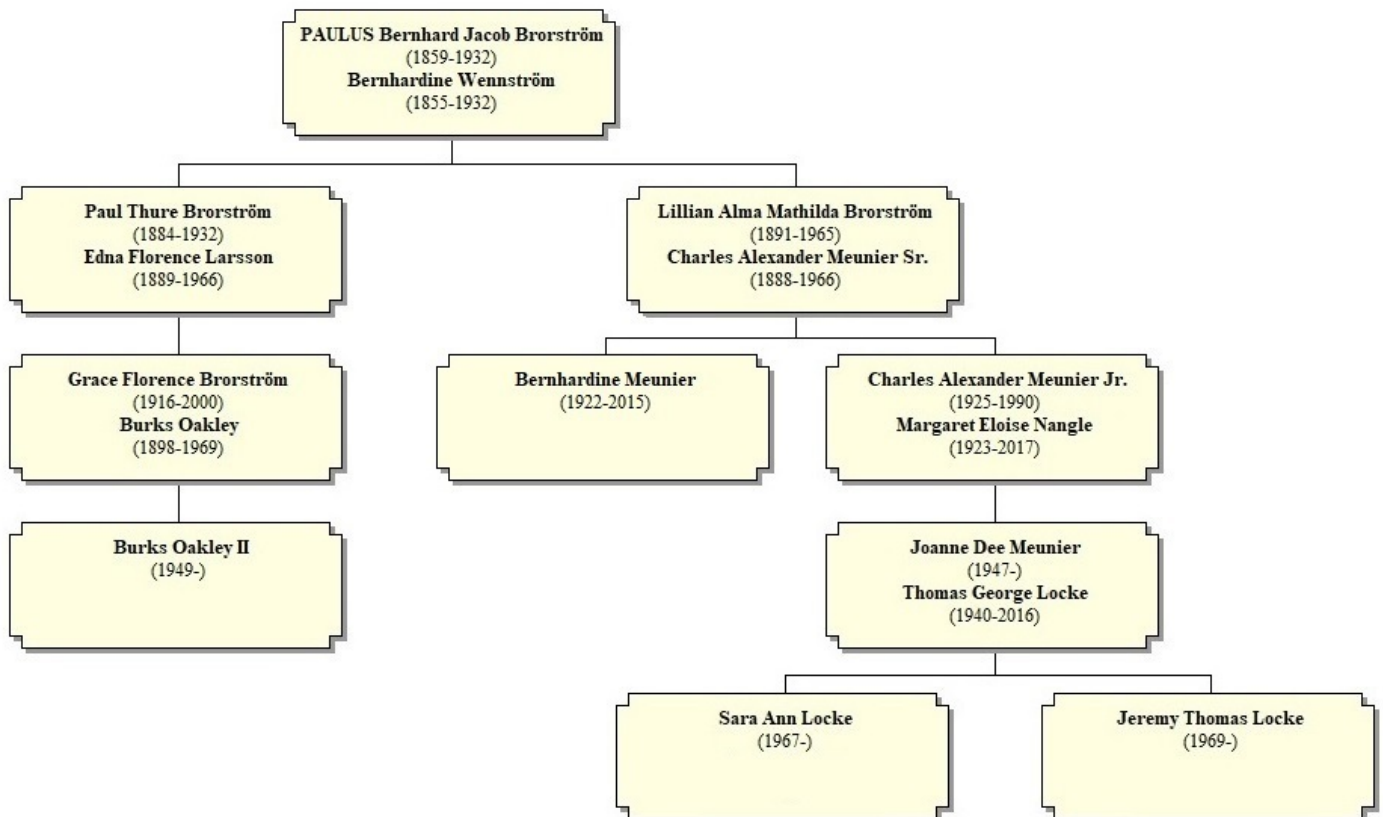
Hello Burks. I am the daughter of Charles Meunier, Jr. My cousin Lorraine Nangle Rosengarten forwarded your email to me. My grandmother, Lillian and her husband Charles would visit your Mom in Pleasantville, NY, from time to time, and on a few occasions, I went with them. I remember meeting your Mom. And I think we met during one of those visits as I remember your name. Anyway, I'm on FB too & we should explore our

heritage a little more. I live in NH and have for the last 50 yrs. Leaving Great Neck, NY in 1966. Hope to hear from you. Joanne

Hot damn! I found a new second-cousin, Joanne Meunier Locke. Over the next few weeks, I was able to fill-in Joanne's branch of the family tree. She and her late husband Thomas G. Locke (1940-2016) had a daughter, Sara (born in 1967) and a son Jeremy (born in 1969). In turn, Sara and her husband (now divorced) have two children and a grandson, making Joanne a great-grandmother. Joanne's son Jeremy (now divorced) has a son.

In addition, I learned that Lillian Brorström Meunier and her husband Charles A. Meunier Sr. had a daughter, Bernhardine Meunier (1922-2015).

My relationship with Joanne's branch of the Brorström-Wennström family tree is shown in the following chart:



This past winter, Joanne moved from New Hampshire to Venice, Florida. We met each other several times during the winter of 2018 – first in Naples, when she visited with her cousin Lorraine Rosengarten, and then in Venice, after she

moved into her new home there. [Recall that I spend winters at my condo in Naples, Florida.]

I subsequently learned that Joanne's father, Charles A. Meunier Jr., and her aunt Bernhardine Meunier (1922-2015), were adopted. They were unrelated before being adopted.

Here is a photo of me with cousin Joanne:



Selfie with Joanne, Naples, Florida – 19 February 2018

Recall that the NANGLE family tree on the Ancestry.com website showed TWO daughters of Charles A. Meunier Jr. Joanne is one; who is the other?

Jane Meunier Miller

In the past few years, I have been investigating other branches of the Brorström-Wennström family. As part of this process, I have been in communication with my second-cousin Nancy Eggers. Nancy is a granddaughter of Grace Brorström (1893-1969), another one of my *morfar*'s younger sisters.

Nancy told me that Joanne has a younger sister named Jane Meunier Miller (born in 1954), and Nancy mentioned that she is in regular communication with Jane. In December 2017, I asked Nancy to pass my e-mail address along to Jane, and the next day, I received an e-mail from Jane.

She wrote:

12/20/17

Hi Cousin Burks,

Nancy gave me your email so that I could contact you. I am Charles Meunier's daughter Jane (Meunier) Miller. Nancy has told me your work on the Brorström family tree. I do not have as much information as Nancy does, but in case you would like to talk to me, my husband and I just bought a home in Naples and plan on staying here until the beginning of May.

.....

Regards,

Jane

When I was at my condo in Naples in January 2018, Jane and I met for brunch. I learned that Jane and her husband have a daughter named Zoë Miller, who is an accomplished violinist – see:

<http://zoe-miller.com/>

Check out the media section of Zoë's website to view several outstanding YouTube videos of Zoë performing violin solos.



Selfie with Jane, Naples, Florida – 22 January 2018

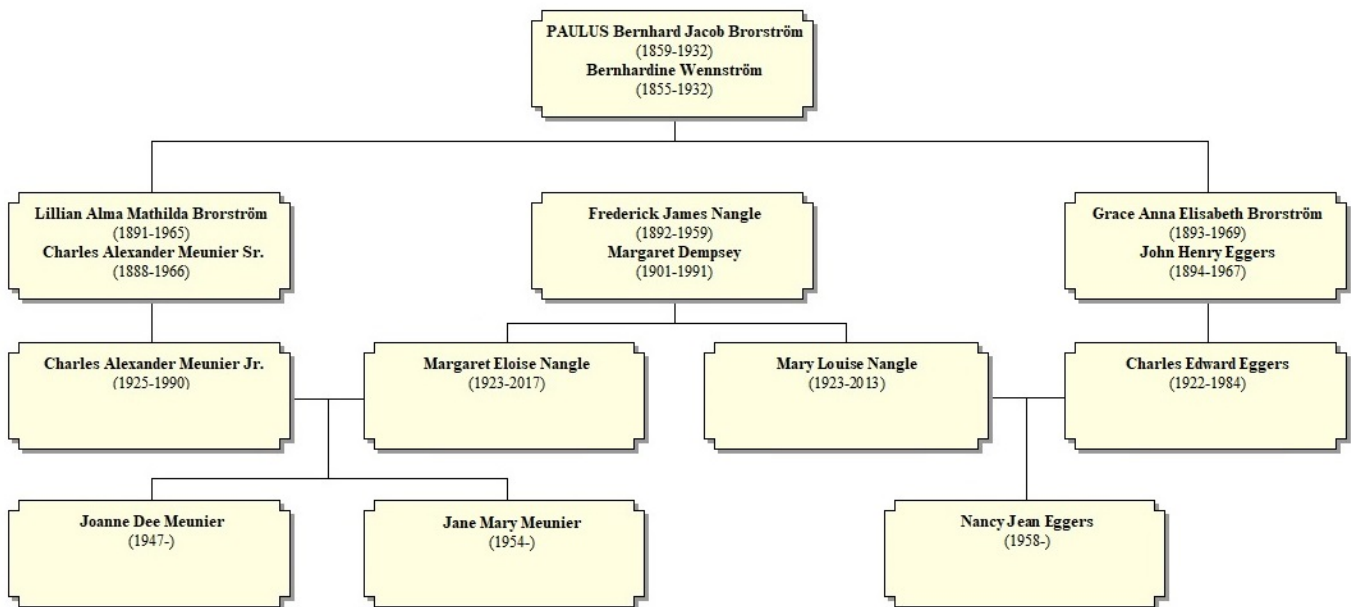


Jane's daughter Zoë Miller – my second-cousin, once-removed.
[Photo from her Facebook page.]

First-Cousins Marrying Twin Sisters

In the previous section, I mentioned my second-cousin Nancy Eggers, who is a granddaughter of Grace Brorström (1893-1969), another one of my *morfar's* younger sisters. Grace married John H. "Jack" Eggers (1894-1967). One of their sons was Charles E. "Chuck" Eggers (1922-1984). Chuck Eggers was a first-cousin of Charles A. Meunier Jr.

It turns out that Nancy's mother, Mary Nangle (1923-2013), and Joanne's (and Jane's) mother, Margaret Nangle (1923-2017), were twin sisters. Chuck Eggers married Mary Nangle, while his first-cousin Charles A. Meunier Jr. married Margaret Nangle. So first-cousins in the Brorström-Wennström family married twin sisters in the Nangle family. Here is a diagram showing these relationships:



This means that Nancy is a first-cousin of Joanne and Jane via the Nangle family, but a second-cousin via the Brorström-Wennström family.

Remember that Margaret Eloise Nangle and Mary Louise Nangle were identical twins.

All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, New York

In July 2018, I visited All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, New York, where a number of Brorström-Wennström family members are buried – including Lillian Brorström Meunier and her husband Charles A. Meunier Sr. Here are some photos that I took:



Gravestone of Lillian Brorström Meunier and her husband Charles A. Meunier Sr.



Grave marker of Charles A. Meunier Jr.
(Father of Joanne and Jane)



Grave marker of Margaret Eloise Nangle Meunier
(wife of Charles A. Meunier Jr., and mother of Joanne and Jane)

The Nangle Connection

The reader who has been paying careful attention to this narrative will surely have asked the question “So why does Lorraine Rosengarten have various branches of the Brorström-Wennström family on her tree on Ancestry.com?”

Well, it turns out that her maiden name was Lorraine Nangle, and her father was John Joseph Nangle Sr. (1928–2011). He was a younger brother of the twin sisters, Margaret Eloise Nangle and Mary Louise Nangle. This means that Lorraine is a first-cousin of Joanne and Jane (and also of Nancy Eggers).

As an aside, Lorraine is an expert genealogist, and she has been helping Joanne find out exactly who her father’s parents were. Recall that he was adopted as an infant.

Summary

In this narrative, I have described how I made contact with my second-cousins Joanne Meunier Locke and Jane Meunier Miller, who are living descendants of my Great-Aunt Lillian Brorström (1891-1965). All I can say is – thank goodness for Ancestry.com! Since Joanne and Jane both live in southwest Florida, I was able to meet them in early 2018, when I was at my condo in Naples. And what interesting women they are! I am so fortunate to have connected with them!!

Appendix

Here is a photo of the three youngest Brorström daughters: Lillian, Grace, and Pauline:

