

The Sigfrid Flodin Story

by Carol Herben

Although much has been written about Sigfrid Flodin he is still one of those elusive identities.

Sigfrid Andreas Flodin was born about 1846 in Gothenburg, Sweden. No research has been undertaken when he arrived in Australia.

Flodin married Johanna (Hannah) Elsberg in 1875 in Sydney. Johanna Elsberg was born on 17 March, 1856 at Halmstaad, Sweden. and arrived as a 17 year old in June 1873 at Maryborough Qld. on board the sailing ship *Alardus*.

A photographer by trade he applied his skills immediately. They first settled in Sydney where their first child John Alfred, later known as Juan Alfred, was born in 1876.

In 1877 the family moved to Kiama where he set up a photographic studio. The family expanded and the following children were born in Kiama, Charles Adolph (Carl) in 1878, Sigrid Ottonia 1879, Hannah Helena (Helena) 1881, Svenborg S L born in 1883. He then moved to Wollongong in 1886 where he set up a photographic studio.

It has been claimed in a newspaper article of 1971 that he built a house named "The Towers" about 1855. In that year he would have been approx 8 years old, so that statement can be discounted.

The land on which the house was built was part of the grant of land to Carles Throsby Smith. In 1880 the Smith trustees, Vincent Wanostrocht Giblin and Timothy O'Sullivan sold Lot 12 of Section 8, comprising of just over 1 acre, to Andrew Lysaght for £65. In the same year, Lysaght sold the land to James Anderson of Fairy Meadow.

In 1886, while James Anderson was the owner of the parcel of land, Sigfrid, Johanna and the children moved to Wollongong. Three years later Flodin purchased the house. On 7 July 1889 James Anderson sold part of the land (under a subdivision) to Sigfrid Andreas Flodin for £200. The following day, 8 July, Flodin took out a mortgage with James Anderson for £500.

By looking at the space of time in regards of the following information, it seems most likely the house had already been built at the time the land was owned by James Anderson. Looking at the style of the building, it dates to the mid 1880s.

With the additional £300 mortgage, Flodin had just sufficient time to set up the tower for the installation of a Camera Obscura. A Camera Obscura is a darkened room with an aperture (lens) through which an image e.g. a panorama of the surrounding district is projected on a surface.

On 19 February, 1890 court proceedings commenced against Flodin for bankruptcy. It was in December 1889 that Anderson executed a sub-mortgage to Charles Coffey Russell (one of the founders of Russell, McLelland and Brown). The land was sold by Public Auction on 8 April, 1890 and was purchased by John Richardson, a school teacher, for £545. John Richardson lived in the house until his death on 1 July, 1912.

The Flodins had a further 6 children, all born in Wollongong. They were Lage Ralph (Ralph) 1886, Sigfrid 1888, Gideon 1889, Bergier 1890, Luida (Linda) 1893 and Thelma Phyllis 1896.

In 1900, newspapers published an advertisement for Arnotts Biscuits with a sketch of Flodin's youngest child. The advertisement was for Milk Arrowroot and it was called Arnotts Living Pictures. Portrait No. 174 was of Thelma Phyllis Flodin aged 3 years, weighing 3 stone 2 pounds. The advertisement states that since 2 weeks old she has been brought up on Arnotts Milk Arrowroot Biscuits.

It is reported that on 19 May 1902 Bankruptcy proceeding were taken against Flodin for the second time.

It was about this time that the Flodin family moved to Dapto. They resided in a house known as **Pendora**. Sigfrid Flodin died at Pendora on 19 December 1903 and was buried in St Luke's Churchyard, Brownsville.

In 1904 Hannah Flodin and children moved to **Royal Stuart** 45 Railway Street, Petersham. On 1 August, 1917 Johanna Flodin made an application for naturalisation. The application has her arrival year and she stated she lived at Kiama for 9 years, Wollongong 17 years and the rest of the time in Sydney. She made a statutory declaration declaring her date of birth. On 7 August 1917 she wrote a letter to the Home and Territories Department to inform them that her late husband Sigfrid Andreas Flodin a Swede had not been naturalised.

Hannah Flodin died at her home Royal Stuart on 23 May, 1930 and was buried on 26 May 1930 at Rookwood Cemetery. Cont'd page 80

The children of Sigfrid and Johanna Flodin were:

Juan Alfred born in 1876 at Sydney, married Elsie Avonia Hokin in 1916. They divorced in 1921. Juan died in 1950 at Lismore.

Carl Adolph born 1878 in Kiama married Stella May Fenwick in 1911. Carl died 28 June 1959 aged 81 years. He had lived at Labrador, Qld for some time before his death. Stella May died 10 April 1979 aged 88 years.

Sigrid Ottonia born 1879 in Kiama, married on 11 December 1909 at her mother's home at Petersham. Sigrid died 7 October 1950 at Katoomba and is buried at Springwood Cemetery.

Hannah Helena born 1881 in Kiama married William A Armstrong on 2 May 1913 at Lismore. Hannah died in 1955 at Newtown.

Svenborg S L born 1883 in Kiama married Charles H Kerr in 1911. Svenborg died in 1916 at Petersham.

Lage Ralph born 1886 in Wollongong married Mildred Amy Samuels in 1916. Lage died 13 June 1939 at Ashfield and Mildred died 10 May 1979. At the time of his death he was living at 45 Dover Street, Summer Hill.

Sigfrid born 1888 in Wollongong migrated to America in 1915. Sigfrid married Agnes Cugan in 1917. They lived at Minnehaha, South Dakota. They were still living there in 1935.

Gideon born 1889 in Wollongong married Ethel M Hittman in 1935 at Chatswood. Gideon died on 31 July 1953 aged 64 years.

Bergier born 1890 in Wollongong married Mabel Isobel Jacobson in 1924 at Ashfield. Bergier died 27 April 1960 aged 69 years.

Luida (Linda) born 1893 in Wollongong married Aage H Staum in 1918 at Petersham.

Thelma Phyllis born 1896 in Wollongong married Ernest A Quarford in 1920 at Rockdale.

The Flodin association with "The Towers" was short lived. Sigfrid was listed as the owner for a period of only 9 months.

After the death of John Richardson in 1912 the family retained ownership of the house until 1938 when it was sold to William John Williams. The house was purchased by Allied Constructions in 1960. Allied demolished the grand old home in February 1971. ...o0o...

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