

The Falks of Sweden

**LETTER FROM GERDA (NETTIE) FALK TO OSCAR FALK,
24 JANUARY 1903¹**

Sprague, Wash.
Jan. 24 – 1903

Mr. Oscar Falk, Dear friend

You will be surprised to hear from me, and excuse me for taking the liberty in writing. It is a gentleman's place first to write to a lady. Papa wanted me to write you a few lines to hear if you were dead or alive for it is so long since we heard from you. I have to write English for I can't write Swede. I have forgotten what I learned in Wis. Out here they are all English and mamma and papa has learned to talk it well. It was very hard for mamma at first until she could talk it. I am a big girl now – towards what I was in Wis. I am not quite as tall as mamma and Frank & Louis are both taller than I. Frank is taller than mamma and Louis very near. Alma died when she was 3 yrs. old soon after we came out here. But I have two other brothers you have never seen. Albert is 13 yr. old and Edgar is 4 yr. old. I am the only girl in the family that lives and soon an old maid. I am 24 yr. old, will be 25 in Oct. Frank is 20 yrs. in March and Louis is 18 yrs. in May. I guess you are married by this time, and if you are not you ought to be. Peter lives 3 miles from us and is still single. He has 95 head of cattle and lives in a little cabin by himself. I have also a farm. I have taken up a homestead. Have two years more to hold it before I can prove up on it. It joins papa's land. Papa has 1 section and a half of land. We are doing well here and like it fine. The country is not pretty and newcomers generally at first don't like it. But the longer they stay the better they like it. I should hate to leave here now. A neighbor of ours sold his land and stock for \$20,000. Land have gone up here and here is no vacant land to be taken up around us. When we first came there wasn't any country fenced hardly and large bands of horses and stock running on the range. But now it is all fenced up. Land that you could buy for 75 cents to \$1.25 an acre sales now at \$5 to \$10 an acre. People have raised good crops these last two three years is why land has taken such a raise. We are all at home except Louis is going to school in town.

Hannah is married I heard. Has she any children and does she live close to you? If so tell her that red dress she made in Wis. for mamma, I tore up for carpet rags the other day. I still have that doll you gave me for a Xmas present once. But have got too big to play with it. I am keeping it for my little girl if I ever have one and if not I am going to give it to one of my brothers little girls when they have one. So you see I think lots of it. They don't come and throw Xmas presents in at the door here. O! I did think that was so much fun. Do you remember when Aunt Alma, you and I went to church that very cold Xmas morning. I can hear how the snow squeaked yet. I guess you know Alma died not long after they were married. Do you know if Mr. or Mrs. Swansen lives yet? I should like to go back to our old home on a visit to see its changes. But not to stay. We haven't had more than two three days snow for sleighing and now the roads are terribly muddy. But Frank went horseback to a dance tonight about 5 miles. I didn't go for I thought it was too muddy. I will send you a photo of Frank. I have none of myself. If you have

¹ Family artifact

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any photo of yourself to spare please send me one. How does Hannah get along and your father? I remember very well how your father used to run and play with me, hiding behind the stumps, and when I pulled the chair away from him. Ha-ha! Well I will close my letter this time hoping to hear from you. We are all well at present, wishing you all the same. With best regards from us all to you all. I remain

Your friend

Nettie Falk

They call me Nettie here instead of Gerda.

(good-bye.)

Note: Nettie (Gerda) Falk might be a relative of Oscar's, or they might just happen to have the same last name. Based on her letter, she was born in Oct. 1879. Johannes Falk had a daughter named Gerda who was born in 1877, so this is not the same person. From the information in the letter, Nettie's family moved to Washington before her 13 year old brother was born, so they must have moved there before 1890. In 1890, Nettie would have been 11.

The 1900 Census for Spokane County, Washington lists Nettie's family, so we know that her parents were Olof and Beatrice Falk. Olof was born in Sweden in 1855, but the children were born in Wisconsin and Washington. Olof was a farmer, as we can tell from Nettie's letter. Her brothers Frank, Louis, Albert and Edgar are all included in their parents' household. In 1900, Nettie was listed separately as head of household of her own property, as she described. By the 1910 Census, she is listed in her father's household once again. She has not been found in the 1920 Census, so perhaps by then she was married with a different last name, and in a different household. In the 1920 Census, Frank is 36 and a stock farmer, Louis is 34 and a farmer, Albert is 30 and a merchant of a general store. Some of these Falks are buried in the Lance Hill Cemetery in Sprague, Washington.

Since we do not know how or if this Falk family is related to us, we have not pursued information on them any further. The information we do have is given here, in case some future genealogist would like to pursue it.