Auto-Biography of Past. A. M. Andersen

Anton Marius Andersen is my full name. My parents were Anders Jørgensen and his wife Maren, nee Andersdatter. I was born in the village Hopballe, Jellinge parish, Danmark March 8, 1847; and I was baptized in my infancy, in the Lutheran Church of Denmark.

We were 7 children in the family, two girls and 5 boys. Ane Kathrine was the oldest, about 11 years older than I. She married Søren Christian Nielsen, and was the mother of our two pastors N. S. & A. S. Nielsen and other children. The Family came to U. S. A. in the spring of 1873. — The next was Anders. He was shot and died in war with Germany in 1864. — The third was Jørgen; he stayed in Danmark, and he has a son there that I am still corresponding with; his name and address is A. J. Andersen, Løsning, Denmark, Europe. — My third brother was Therkel, about 2½ year older than I. He was for many years privat schoolteacher and for some years also Inner Missionary. — Then it is my place, born, as stated above, in 1847. — My youngest brother was Jens, about 2½ years younger than I. He left quite a family and died several years ago. For some time he was wheel-wright, but for se-

veral years he was nearly blind, and as I understand, he raised bees. — The youngest of us was my other sister Juliane. She married a widower. Since that time I don't know much about her. She died many years ago. I am now the only one of the family living.

My father was a farmer. But when I was about 4 years old we moved from Hopballe to Bigballe, Ostersnede parish, where he bought an other farm. The main reason for this move was to get privat Christian school for us children. Rationalism was at that time quite general in Danmark, so they dared not to send us to public schools. Thus we were raised under influence of a Christian home and Christian school in a Christian community.

We boys had a good deal of the time to work out, I for years at a large farm to tend cattle, about 20 cows and 15 young cattle. We had no fences so the cattle were all lariated and had to be moved forward several times a day; and they were coupled up and taken to water and home at night. Thought of no other way to do it, and that gave employment to boys and several old men. There last once were called „Rigtere".

When a youth I learned the weavers trade. At that time most of the weaving was done by hand. I worked

at that trade till I was about 22 when I was drafted for Military Service. After I had served my term as such and came back home a saw chance to follow my hearts desire to begin study for the Christian ministry.

I began at the Folk Highschool at Ryslinge, Funen. After some Time there I took lessons from my home pastor, Provost J. Wahl, and he advised me to go to America to be educated for ministry among my countrymen here. A church mission among them was sorely needed. In the spring of 1873 I came to America. In the summer following I worked on a farm in Wisconsin to make some money which I needed. In the passed 8th of March I was 25 years. In the fall I went to Minneapolis to begin study at Augsburg theological Seminary. The following summer I worked during vacation on a farm in Minnesota, and in the fall I had a sick spell from blood-dysentery. That was at my brother in law and my sisters, the mentioned S. G. Nielsens who had settled in Polk county, Wisconsin. The following winter I was again studying at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis.

The following summer I spent my vacation at Two Rivers, Morrison co., Minn. A Danish Settlement there had asked Augsburg Seminary for a student, that could teach a term of Common School and preach

Danish to the settlers on Sundays. I was selected, passed examination for the county superintendent and filled the positions as teacher and preacher as best I could, and got paid for both.

At about the close of that vacation came an urgent wish from Rev. H. Hansen, who had been sent to Nebraska in the spring to survey the mission field among Danes in that state, for help. Officers of the church wrote and asked me to come back to the Seminary to pass examinary for the the ministry in view of being ordained and sent to Nebraska as assistent to Rev. Hansen. It was in October, 1874. After visiting families in Omaha and several Danish settlements in eastern Nebraska we went to Dannebrog, Nebr., where a congregegation had been organized. A meeting was called, & preached, and in a business meeting after the service I was called to be its first local pastor. I accepted.

From Dannebrog we went to Grand Island, where we had a meeting in a private house in the evening. Next day we went to a settlement in Hamilton Co. Our driver of a farmer wagon, drawn by two strong horses, ventured right through the Platte river. But nearing the south edge we stuck in a bar of quick sand, and a 3 year old horse refused to pull. The driver had to unhitch and ride to a farmer for help. Meanwhile Rev. Hansen and I sat in the wagon shivering in

strong November northwest gale. The farmer (Peter Wind) came back with the farmer and a span of oxen and an iron eye bole. With that fastned to the wagon pole the oxen pulled us ashore. With the horses hitched to wagon again we drove fast to Mr. Winds home where Mrs. Wind had a good meal ready for us, and we soon forgot our adversities.

We had a fine meeting there in a sod-school-house. There were no churches. Also here I preached, was called to serve that place one Sunday a month, and I accepted.

Eventually I took up other mission points, three in Howard Co., 6-8-15 miles from Dannebrog, one in Seward co. about 100 miles, another in Nuckolls Nuckolls co. about 120 miles. My means of conveyance was a horse and buggy; but the mare died, and I drove a small mule that a god friend let me use. Of course I could not serve all these places on Sundays, so the places farthest off had to be satisfied with weekday services, and that they were.

In the beginning I was single, my fiance leiving at Rev. Johan Olsens at St. Ansgar, Ia., since I was ordained. We decided to meet in Omaha and have Rev. H. Hansen marry us the 3d of March, 1875, her 20th birthday. But she was snowbound, so our marriage was postponed till the 5th of March. No use to say that our means were small, and we furnished our ~~so~~ rented house accordingly.

But I have to be short. After about 1½ years in that field I got a call from a congregation in Racine, Wis. and circumstances were such that I was glad to accept it. There we stayed about 3½ years and were called back to Nebraska, to places in the eastern Part, Washington and Burt counties.

My work there led to the beginning of a mission in Blair. And in 1883 we had a house built and moved there. I served places at Argo, Burt county county, Fremont, Doge Co., Kennard, Washington Co., and other mission fields. In 1884 the "Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association in America" was organized and that led to the beginning of our school, Trinity Seminary in the fall of 1884; I was elected to start it, and it was begun in our own house with a few students. In course of two years funds were collected and a building erected on the hill west of Blair; that city contributing $3,000 towards it. The cost of it was ca. $7,000. It was dedicated Oct. 21, 1886. It has grown ever since. I resigned as its President, in the fall of 1888 (I think it was) and accepted a call from the congregation at Hampton, Nebr., that I had served once before. After 5 years I was called back to the school at Blair to teach theology.

In the fall of 1896 the Church-Association merged with "The Dan. Ev. Luth. Ch. in No. Am." and organized the U. D. Ev. L. Ch. and after a year as teacher I resigned and got a call from congregations

at Viborg, Spring Valley and Gayville, S. Dak. After a service there of 6 years I was elected to be editor of „Danskeren" and moved with family to Blair in November, 1903. As such I worked until that paper was laid down, and Luthersk Ugeblad was started in the Spring of 1922; and we moved to Beresford, S.D. There we stayed til in the fall of 1935, when we moved to Glendale, California.

Our Family – Children Living:

1. Agnes Krestine, now Mrs. Geo. W. Larsen,
   Bellflower, California.
2. Anders Magnus Andersen,
   Gayville, So. Dakota.
3. Silas C. Andersen, M.D.,
   Minneapolis, Minn.
4. Emma Alvina, now Mrs. W. L. Seiler,
   ~~now Mrs. W. L.~~ Avalon, Calif.
5. Anton Nielsen Andersen,
   Reingsted, Iowa.
6. Ruthven Christian Andersen, M.D.,
   Bancroft, Nebr.
7. Allen Emil Andersen, Ph.D.,
   Wagner College, Staten Island N.Y.