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Dakota Territory Pioneer Nils Anderson

BY JIM DICK, GREAT-GRANDSON OF
NILS & JOSEFINA ANDERSON

In 1880, the settlement of new lands in America was hot news in Europe. Steamship lines were after passengers to haul and the American railroads needed immigrants to come over and settle along the new lines being laid. The talk of free land encouraged many to take the trip.

One of these early Dakota Territory pioneers was my maternal great-grandfather *Nils Anderson*,¹ who departed from Malmö, Sweden, June 3, 1880, on a ship called *The Patriot*,² landing in Warren, PA. He made his way to Casselton, Dakota Territory, where he got a job working on the railroad.

His family stayed behind in Sweden, planning on following when Nils found a place for them to live. In the early spring of 1881, Nils walked 25 miles southwest of Lisbon and, pounding a stake into the ground, claimed for his homestead the SE Quarter of Section 8 in Isley Township, Dakota Territory.

Nils got busy by first digging a well and then with his team of oxen plowed some prairie and built a sod house and sod barn. In July, his wife *Josefina*³ came over from Sweden with their three small children⁴ and her widowed mother⁵ and joined Nils on his homestead.

Josefina had been a midwife in Sweden and she continued with this in her new community where she would walk miles to get to where she was needed. Times for the early settlers were very harsh, with diphtheria, flu, and the absence of medical care being especially hard on the young. Between 1885 and 1891, Nils and Josefina lost four of their children, burying them on their farm in caskets that Nils made. A monument now marks the spot.

As his farming progressed, Nils acquired a horse to pair with one of his oxen. It is not known if the other ox was traded, died a natural death, or was butchered for food, but at any rate the horse was very welcome because it made travel faster and easier. Before he had a horse, Nils would

walk to town and the family told that, on one occasion, he carried a 100-pound sack of new-milled flour on his back for 25 miles from Lisbon to the farm.

Nils told my dad that the ox was better than the horse at pulling a load, but had a limitation during hot weather. The makeup of an ox is such that only its nose sweats and when overheated, this ox would head for a slough and lie in the water to cool down. Nils said that on one occasion he didn't pull the hitch pin soon enough and the beast dragged the implement right along into the water.

In 1909, with their sons Bill, Carl, and John doing the farming, Nils and Josefina headed up to Vanguard, Saskatchewan, and there on the prairie staked a homestead claim. They soon found that wells were not possible in that area, with snow melt, water off the roof, or from a slough being the only available water.

Nils again plowed the prairie and built a sod house and a barn. The markets were not really good, the roads were very bad, and the winters extra long, but the land would grow wheat and Nils did OK. By 1918 land prices were up and Nils was 71 years old and feeling it, so he sold his Canadian farm and went back to North Dakota.

That fall, Nils and Josefina bought a new



Nils and Josephine Anderson.

house in the town of Englevale, where they planned on enjoying their retirement.

Unfortunately, only six months later, Josefina suffered a stroke and died in 1919. Nils continued to live in Englevale until in 1930 he passed away at the age of 83.

The lives of Nils and Josefina Anderson could be summed up by saying that they had farmed in three countries: Sweden, Canada, and America, and had left behind the Isley Township homestead (which is still in the family) as well as hundreds of descendants. It is a pleasant coincidence that 2006 marks the anniversary of Nils Anderson staking his homestead claim and of the first settlement in Englevale, Ransom County, North Dakota.

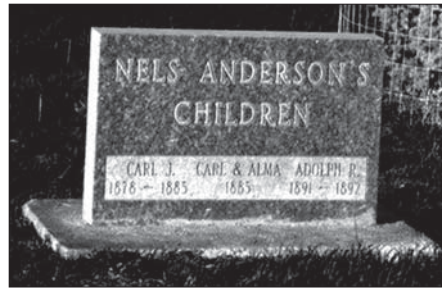
In 2006, we take a little time to celebrate memories of the many immigrants who committed their lives to coming here and building the communities that we now enjoy. Perhaps 100 years from now other



The square shows Ransom County, and the star the approximate location of Englevale.

people will look back and have something to say about us. But it will be hard for us to match the legacy left by those earlier ones who walked out on the prairie and built their homes out of sod.

Written in 2006 for the 125th anniversary of Englevale, North Dakota.



More about the Anderson family

Janna Diggs, the author's daughter, has sent the following information about the Anderson children:

Amanda Christina Nilsdotter - born 3 Feb., 1877 in Ryssby, (H), Sweden, died 9 Jan. 1940 in North Dakota.

Carl Johan Nilsson - born 22 July 1878 in Ryssby, (H), Sweden; died 1885 in Dakota Territory.

Selma Josefina Nilsdotter - born 1 Sep. 1880 in Ryssby, (H), Sweden and died 24 Nov. 1938 in North Dakota.

Nils William - born 31 Dec. 1882 in Dakota Territory and died 10 Dec. 1972 in North Dakota.

Adolph Robert - born and died 1884 (I think the cemetery stone might have the wrong dates as it says born 1891 and died 1892).

Carl (twin) - born and died 1885 in Dakota Territory.

Alma (twin) - born and died 1885 in Dakota Territory.

Carl Leonard - born 18 Oct. 1886 in Dakota Territory and died 17 Dec. 1967 in North Dakota.

John Elof - born 10 March 1889 in Dakota Territory.

Daisy Wilhelmina - born 4 March 1891 in North Dakota and died 20 June 1969 (in Canada?).

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Editor's notes:

1) Nils Andersson was born 5 December 1847 in Hörja parish, (Krist.), but it was recorded in the Hörja birth records that the family was recorded in Ramsberga in Norra Åkarp, (L).

(Hörja (L) CI:4 (1823-1880) image 26 / p. 43 [Arkiv Digital]).

Nils was not recorded in Norra Åkarp, as his parents and the other children (son *Ola* [b.1839], daughter *Bengta* [b.1843] and son *Elof* [b.1845] were moving to Markaryd (G), so little Nils was probably born during the move to their new home.

(Norra Åkarp (L) AI:9 [1846-1851], image 74, p. 140 [Arkiv Digital]).

The parents were sharecropper *Anders Månsson* (b. 1 March 1817 in Färingtofta [L]) and his wife *Christina Svensdotter* (b. 16 Nov. 1808 in Finja [L]).

In Markaryd the family owned a farm at Ulvaryd Östergård. Wife *Christina* died there on 26 Jan. 1854, according to her probate (Sunnerbo *Häradsrätt* FII:58, p. 135).

Widower *Anders Månsson* remarried to *Bengta Nilsdotter* (b. 27 July 1823 in Hörja). The couple had more children. *Anders Månsson* died 2 Feb. 1879 at Ulvaryd Östergård.

2) *Nils Andersson* left Malmö on 3 June 1880 in the company of his brother *Elof*. Their destination was Warren, PA. Their tickets cost 133 Swedish *kronor* (which then might have been around \$36).

3) *Josefina* (Josephine) *Jonasdotter* was born 24 Sept. 1854 in Slakmöre, Ryssby (H). (Ryssby (H) C:7 (1844-1860) Image 115 / page 223 [Arkiv Digital]).

Her parents were carpenter *Jonas Nilsson* (b. 1809 in Ryssby) and his wife *Gustafva Fredrika Johansdotter* (b. 1 June 1824 in Fagerhult (H)). *Jonas* died 21 Feb. 1879 in Slakmöre.

His widow *Gustafva Fredrika* accompanied her daughter and the grandchildren to the U.S., when she and the children left Malmö on 7 July 1881, with tickets for New York. *Josefina* and the children travelled on prepaid tickets, but the grandmother had to pay 105 *kronor*. They all travelled on *The Patriot*.

Nils and *Josefina* married on 3 Jan. 1877, and he had come to Slakmöre on 2 Jan. 1877 (Ryssby [H] EI:3 [1861-1894] Image 51) [Arkiv Digital]), so they must have known each other before. The distance between Markaryd and Slakmöre is about 155 miles.

Förteckning öfver inför Polismästare-Embetet i Malmö den 9 Juli 1881, samt National liniens agent genom Adolph Jönsson

utrakter, afslutade emellan nedannämnde utvandrare, som med ångfartyget Patriot uppvisade på frö Malmö den 9 Juli 1881, samt National liniens agent J. O.

Nummer i Polisen-Bock	Kontraktets		Utvandrarens				Passage-rare-afgift		
	N:	Datum:	Titel eller Yrke.	Namn.	Ålder.	Hemort.	Destinationsort.	Kr.	öre
450	3/8		Hustru	Josefina Andersdotter	26	Ryssby	New York	fril	
"	"		Dotter	Amanda	4	"	"	"	"
"	"		Son	Carl Johan	2	"	"	"	"
"	"		Dotter	Selma Josefina	34	"	"	"	"
451			Enkan	Gustafva Fredrika Johansdotter	57	"	"	105	

Poliskammaren in Malmö (M) D3:4 (1881-1881) Image 860 (Arkiv Digital).