

Family Story of George Samuel and Nancy Angeline (German) Anderson

This story was written by Leona (Anderson) Sims, one of George and Nancy's daughter's.

My memory of the events in our big happy family are a little vague until I was nearly five years of age. I distinctly remember our Mother rocking me to sleep; a little calf with a broken leg, which Father had mended with splints, and the excitement of sister Irby's wedding, February 28, 1899.

Our parents were George Samuel Anderson and Nancy Angeline German. Our father was born in Iowa on April 1, 1850, the son of a Civil War veteran. His brothers were James, Riley and Marion, his sisters, Carrie, Sarah and Jane. Our mother, Nancy Angeline German, was born in Iroquois County, Illinois near Wasetka on February 28, 1858. Her father had been married earlier to Elizabeth Briggs and two girls were born to that union. The mother died in 1853 and the girls died in childhood.

In 1868 my Grandfather and his brother Will and John German, came to Kansas and bought relinquishment's of settlers who had become discouraged and decide to give up their Kansas land. The three brothers chartered a railroad car and shipped the livestock and machinery to Sedalia, Missouri which was as far west as the railroad extended at that time. They crossed the Missouri River by ferry boat and someone, to whom she had trusted to care of her baby, had gone on across the river and she was separated from the baby by the wide, murky river.

My Grandfather did very well financially in Neosha County. This was a low, moist climate and malaria became an ever-present health menace. There was no means of mosquito control at this time, which was later found to be the carrier of the dreadful disease. My Grandfather lost several members of his family and decided to move farther west. (Emma, Jacob and Amy died in Neosha County).

My mother and father met in Neosha County and after a short courtship they were married at Chanute, Kansas on September 25, 1876. My mother was eighteen and my father twenty-six at the time of their marriage.

Later my Father's brother Marion married my mother's sister Emma. This was not a happy marriage and after the birth of one son, Everett Anderson, Emma died. My cousin, Everett Anderson, grew up in my grandparent's home. He was about the age of my brother Ernest. Everett was extremely handsome, tall and slender with beautiful brown eyes and could sing like a lark. As a young man he went to California where he married and raised a family. He kept in touch with my Uncles, Clarence and Alfred German through the years. Since their deaths, I have heard nothing of my cousin Everett Anderson.

I, Carrie Leona Anderson was born three miles north of Stafford, Kansas on March 1, 1894. I was my parent's ninth child. They had lost a little girl, Velma, when she was 19 months of age, in Neosha County. She was their fourth child. They lost a little five-year-old boy, David Lee, their sixth child. He is buried in Stafford Elementary. In light of later medical knowledge, he died of mastoid infection. My mother never ceased to grieve for these two children and on the anniversaries of their births or deaths, would be in tears most of the day.

Ours was a happy home, as I remember it, with never a dull moment. Our father loved us so much that he would not discipline us. His most effective punishment was, "I am ashamed of you." Mother loved us so much that she made us be obedient to parental control. If we needed punishment we got it in direct proportion to the offense. I am sure every one of us has appreciated mother's discipline just as much as father's loving indulgence. It took both to keep us happy and able to meet life as it came.

Our father was a natural musician. He played organ; piano, fife and french harp. He would come in from work, clean up and go to the organ and play so beautifully. He taught Lester and me to chord on the organ while he played violin. Mother would sometimes sing when father played the organ. Ours was a musical family. Sister Maggie became the most skilled in organ playing. Music was a part of our growing up.

The first outstanding event in my memory is Irby's marriage. She and Albert were married on Mother's birthday, February 28, 1899. Eve was born May 30th after Irby was married. Mother told Lester and me that Irby was going to go and keep house for Albert. We protested loud and clear. Then we decided we just would not let Albert come to our house. He was coming quite regularly, every other weekend. On the next Saturday when Albert was expected, we sat on the doorstep waiting for him, after Irby had scrubbed us. We had two dogs, a little white dog and a big, black dog, Rover. In due time Albert turned into our driveway. We jumped up with our dogs and ran out shouting, "Chase him, Rover, chase him, Funny (for Funston). Chase that Albert Allmon, he can't have our sister, he can't have Irby, he can do his own coking!" Albert just came driving right on and our friendly dogs ran to him and welcomed him as a future member of the family should have been welcomed. We gave up!

I don't remember too much about the wedding. I remember how lovely my dear sister looked in her lovely white wedding dress. I thought she looked just like an angel. I loved her so much! I don't know just where I had acquired my idea of an angel but I still expect them to look like my wonderful sister Irby looked on her wedding day. My mother's idea of any girl's wedding was that it should be in her parental home. Everyone of our mother's six daughters were married in our mother's home.

It was the custom at this time for the groom's parents to entertain for the two families the third day after the wedding. This was called the infare celebration. Uncle Albert had two teenage sisters, (Amy and Bertha), and a little sister Alta, just my age. Our entire family did not go to the infare but father, mother, Lester and I went. The Allmon women were always noted for their culinary art but I only remember one item on the menu, that was a dish of red and white stick candy which Albert's sister jokingly called tooth picks. The table was groaning with food but I only remember the tooth picks.

Eva was born May 30 after Irby's marriage. Mother did not tell Irby of her expectations. Imagine Irby's surprise when she came home early in June and found a new baby sister! My surprise and joy and rapture! Brother Ernest and Uncle Alfred German were working in the field that morning before I learned of the baby sister. I was so excited. They came in at noon and were feeding their horses. I dashed out shouting, "Your can't guess what we have!" They guessed a baby pig, calf and other absurdities. I finally shouted, "It's a baby sister." Instead of shouting with delight, Ernest said, Well, I'll be darned," and Uncle Al echoed, "I'll be darned." I couldn't grasp such mild reaction to such a marvelous revolution. Eva was not the kind of child to be coddled. Spoiled or indulged. She was independent, creative and self reliant from the very first, with an exploitative mind; a delightful child and an enrichment to our family life always.

I started to school at the Rising Sun School in western Reno County. My first teacher was Norman Trotter. I immediately fell in love with him, not for myself but for sister Maggie. There were over forty kids in that one-room school. In the beginner's class were Earl and Amy Keesling, Arthur and Mary Newton, Henry Withroder, Westley and Vern Davis, Dora and Charley Shore, Cora and Joe Ungrove, Lester and Me. Classes were not graded as of now. In the afternoon, I was so tired and began to cry. The teacher asked me what was wrong and I said I wanted to sit with Sister Frances. Frances, was so sweet and gave me her big geography to look at. I think that I repeated that performance every day for the first week of school.

Ernest would help with the cattle feeding and then ride his bicycle to school. We other kids walked on much earlier. I was so slow and got so tired that it was decided for me to wait and ride on the seat they fixed for me on the handlebars of Ernest's bicycle. It was a privilege for anyone, who was cold, to sit on a bench back of the stove and get warm during the teacher's devotional service. One morning Ernest and I came in during the teacher's devotions. Ed Keesling was sitting warming himself by the stove. I was cold so I sat down beside Ed. He was so kind to me! He whispered to me that Mr. Watson (teacher) had said for us all to kneel for the prayer. I was so thankful that Ed told me because I didn't want to be lacking in respect. When Mr. Watson laid his Bible on the desk, folded his hands, bowed his head, I devotedly knelt by the bench and remained so during the prayer. I wondered for a long time why that bench shook so violently during prayers that morning!

There were no high schools at this time. Kids could teach at 16 years of age. I was the first one in our family of teachers to be required to have four years of high school before teaching.

Mr. Keesling, our father and Mr. Fred Lang were on the school board at Rising Sun School. When I was in second grade they hired a man past middle age as teacher. He couldn't cope with the older pupils and sometimes took his frustrations out on we younger ones. I have no idea what I did to displease him but he sent me outside the school room to sit out my punishment on the steps. I know how a criminal feels when banished from the mob! I was crying my heart out when the door opened and out came big brother Ernest. He dried my tears, sat down on the steps and comforted me. I was crying because the teacher had said I was a bad girl. Ernest said I was not a bad girl at all, I was really an extra good girl because I was his little sister. He said, "That teacher is an old so and so; I feel like socking him." He also said, "You are not going to stay out here along because I am going to stay out here with you," this he did. How good he was! He also said, "That teacher wouldn't know a bad girl if he met one on the streets of New York City!"

I still marvel at the wonderful parents that were ours. We had family worship in the evening. Father or Mother read from the Bible, often stopping to explain the meaning to us. Then we all knelt down by our chairs for prayers. We younger ones said the "Now I lay me down to sleep," the next group, "The Lord's Prayer" and the older ones prayed individually.

In the winter of 1903 Grandpa

Anderson in Des Moines was not well. When the fall work was done father went to Iowa to visit his parents and stayed about a month. He enjoyed his visit very much and was glad he made the trip because his father died the next spring. The following summer cousin Minta Anderson, the daughter of Uncle James, brought Grandma Anderson up to visit the family in Kansas. Grandma Anderson was the cutest, tiniest, perkiest little black-eyed lady with dark hair and no gray hairs. Minta was about the age of Ernest and Maggie and the young people had a lively time while Grandma visited. When they were eating one of their first

meals in our home, Grandma Anderson said in her precise way. "Minta, do you notice how much better his Kansas cheese tastes than the cheese in Des Moines?" Minta smiled and said she too had noticed how good the cheese was even though she knew it was some cheese left over from their lunch packed in Des Moines for their train ride.

In the spring of 1905 my father bought a quarter section of land 3-1/2 miles from Sylvia. This was on the farthest west side of Reno County. There was a one room house and a barn. Irby was married, Maggie was teaching, Ernest was going to school in Nicherson High School. Father, mother and we younger children lived in the one room house while the big house (four large rooms) were being built. All went well, Father rented extra farm land and had good crops, we were planning to build onto the house. Frances graduated from eighth grade.

Maggie and Edgar Keesling were married September 19, 1906. Ed had built a new house on his land near the Keesling home in northwest Reno County. In this home their seven children, a baby girl, Glen, Gerald, Paul, Clair, Cleo and Geneva were all born. The first child, a baby girl died a few days after birth and Cleo passed away at about two years of age.

Later in February of 1907 Father became ill with a respiratory congestion, Mother was not well either. Dr. Bauer came out every morning, but Father's condition worsened and the family was all called home. One the morning of March 6th our Father passed away. Mr. Keesling, Ed's Father, was with us and was helping care for Father. He was a pillar of strength and took care of everything! My family had a family burial plot in the Stafford Cemetery; little Lee was buried there. Our Father's funeral was held in the Christian Church in Stafford with Marion Draper officiating. Many relatives and friends were there from many places. Flowers were not available the as now. Uncle Albert's family met us in Stafford. Mrs. Allmon had arranged a beautiful wreath of greenery and white Easter lilies from her houseplants. How beautiful it looked on Father's casket! For the first time flowers spoke to me of the beauties to be expected in our heavenly home. I was comforted!

Mr. Keesling stayed with us for a time after Father's funeral. It was spring and the new pigs and calves were coming in flocks and droves. He helped us get organized and then he was called to help in the extreme illness of his neighbor who passed away soon afterward. We were on our own, but how kind and helpful neighbors and friends were. Frances was teaching a rural school south of Sylvia. There were three more weeks to school. By common consent, her school board arranged for her to complete the finals of the term and dismissed early. What a pillar of strength she was for Mother and we children!

Frances was boarding in the home of a family, the Gus Waggoners, during her school term. Here she met a handsome young man, Edward Moyer, recently returned from service in the U.S. Army in the Philippines. They became close friends, later sweethearts. He was especially kind and understanding of her grief after our Father's death. They fell in love and were married three years later in November of 1910.

I remember my Mother as the bravest person I have ever known, as industrious and efficient manager. The morning following Father's funeral she said, "Children we will stay right her on this farm and do everything just as we thing Pa Pa would do it if he were here," This we did for three years and she managed everything and we got along fine. She had her ups and downs with inefficient hired help but she was equal to that. Then the greatest tragedy of our lives struck. My dear brother Lester, my constant companion, my chum, was thrown from a horse and badly injured. His arm was broken above and below the elbow and he received a head and neck injury from which he never recovered. He lived for many

years but had to be hospitalized; most of the time in Topeka. The doctor kept holding out hope that they could operate and restore our dear one to normalcy. They would set a date for the surgery and Mother would go to Topeka, to be with him only to be disappointed time after time. Sometimes Ernest or Albert would go with her, but many time she went alone. Father had a niece and her husband living in Topeka, Bonnie and Theodore Fenstermaker. They were kindness itself to Mother and pillars of strength. Mr. Fenstermaker always went to the hospital with Mother.

My brother lived for a number of years in this passive, non-responsive condition and died at the Larned State Hospital. He is buried in Stafford Cemetery in the burial plot of the family.

Mother had been a teacher in Neosho County in the early years of her marriage. Her three children, Irby, Maggie and Ernest, all started to school to Mother. She taught what was called a conscription school. (A conscription school was supported by the parents of the individual children.) She loved teaching and was very successful. She made teachers of out of her children.

At Christmas time when the older sisters and Ernest were teaching hey would go to 'Stafford to get candy for treats for their students. The big family table was extended to it's fullest and the whole family would help fill the sacks of treats. This is a highlight in my childhood memories.

The Barnes High School Law when into effect in Kansas the year that I graduated from the 8th grade. This required beginner teachers to have high school in order to teach. I began with one year of High school required and increased yearly until teachers were required to have four years of high school before teaching. This made it impossible for me to teach without a high school diploma. This was when Mother decided to rent the farm, move to town and put me in high school.

Live was very different for us after we moved into Stafford in the fall of 1910. Frances stayed with us and helped us to adjust. She went with me when I enrolled in Stafford High School. This was a big high school. There were only two high schools in the county at that time, Stafford and St. John.

We missed sister Frances greatly after she and Edward Moyer were married. But my brave and capable Mother id not let circumstances stop or frighten her. She accepted life as it came and marched on bravely. I am so lacking in this ability, which characterized our Mother. Sister Jessie was very much like our Mother in this ability.

I just got started into high school when Mother became ill with chronic appendicitis. I card for Mother, a bed patient, for many months and missed that term of school, but started back the next Fall. I graduated in the Spring of 1915 with a normal training certificate to teach. Eva was in the fifth grade when we moved to Stafford and completed grade school and high school there and became a teacher. We were all successful teachers, were happy in our work and our Mother was proud of her family. We could not have chosen a profession that pleased her more than teaching.

We were happy in Stafford and made friends easily. Mother worked constantly and enjoyed her work. She was a real gifted sales person, selling a line of toilet articles and also measured and fitted ladies for foundation garments (quite expensive and much in demand.)

Soon after we moved to Stafford Mother and Jessie bought a nice property (four rooms, large clothes closet, large pantry and three porches) on the east side of North Main Street. How happy we were to be in our own home again! Jessie was teaching in the Lulu Valley School a mile and a half northwest of Stafford. Life continued quite pleasantly for Mother, Jessie, Eva, and me. Mother worked entirely too hard. There was some income from the farm and many worries. Jessie and I both waited tables at the Brinkman Hotel during the Summers. Mother didn't entirely approve of this, but the pay was good!

I think that I was a sophomore in high school when at a Sunday school party one night I met Ward. I had known his brother Earl for some time. He was counting a teacher, Nettie Bond, whom I especially liked. I hope I didn't stare but every time I looked at Ward he winked at me – what a rascal! I secretly hoped he would ask to take me home that night but he didn't. An old adage states, “All things come to those who wait.” Praises be! I waited and on the following Sunday night, Ward was waiting for me at the church door and took me home. I was never lonely again until the last five years!

About this time sister Jessie began going with George Jones. George was almost a relative. His father's brother; Sam Jones, was married to my mother's sister Frances. George lived and farmed his 80 acres in the Peace Creek neighborhood. He had gone to school to sister Maggie and was very likeable. His 80 acres were not enough land for the amount of money a farmer had to invest in farm machinery. A great tract of government land had been opened up for homesteading in Power's County, Colorado, south of Lamar. George was interested in this but Jessie was allergic to the very thought of such a venture. When George came back he had filed on a claim (320 acres) of land south of Granada, Colorado. That Winter Jessie stayed in Kansas and taught school in western Reno County. George went to Colorado and started improving his land. He built a comfortable one-room house, investing in water well drilling equipment and cattle. He did well financially.

In the Spring George and Jessie moved to Colorado. This was not Jessie's kind of life and try as she did, she could not adjust. Jessie continued to come back to Kansas and teach during the school year. After the homestead was secured they moved back to Hutchinson and George went into the building business with his brothers, Bill and Abe Jones, and they did well financially. They later moved to Lawrence, Kansas and Jessie began teaching in Eudora when her children were in school. George went to Hutchinson and continued in the carpenter's trade. Jess bought a nice home in Lawrence and rented the upstairs rooms to students at the University of Kansas. Jessie continued her education at the University of Kansas and graduated in June of 1957.

After I began teaching, Mother and I bought jointly a modest home in the northeast section of Stafford. It was a comparatively new five room house with much garden space and a young cherry orchard just coming into full bearing. There was also a small chicken house and yard. Mother, Eva and I lived there and were quite comfortable. Eva and I were both married there and Mother lived on there, coming and going amongst her children, as long as she was able to be alone.

My Mother was never ready for her daughters to get married. After Ward and I had been going steady for a few weeks, Mother said, “Daughter, are you planning to marry that fellow?” I said, “I hope so – don't you like him?” She replied, “That is not the question.” “Yes, I do like him, but he doesn't look strong. He has worked too hard for his years and I don't think he will live to be forty years of age.” On the morning of Ward's fortieth birthday he said, “I hope Mother Anderson knows that I have lived to be forty years of age.”

Moth spent the last four years of her life in our home. She was not well and was very frail. The last two years of her life, she was a bed patient. Ward and our three children were always so kind and considerate of Mother. When she became a bed patient, I could not life Mother. Each morning Ward would come and lift Mother from her bed to the chair. He would wait while I hurriedly made her bed and then would lift her back for me.

Living in our town was a maiden lady, Anna Hillman. Sometimes when I needed to get away for a day or an afternoon, I would get Anna to care for Mother. She was good, reliable and a real help. When Elbert and Esther were married in Garden City, I got Anna to stay with Mother. After we had gone, Mother said to Anna, "now we will just play that we are "old maids" today and have a real good time!"

Mother passed away in our home in the summer after she was 81 years of age. She was not especially ill, she just gradually grew weak and more frail. Our doctor told us that Mother was slipping away. We called Maggie and Ed. They came fight out. Mother passed away on July 31, 1939. Her funeral was held by Peacock-Soice Chapel in Stafford on August 2, 1939. We missed her so very much. I had some trouble adjusting to normal family living after Mother's death.

When World War II broke out teachers became scare, I began substituting for teachers in Clark County, especially in the Minneola schools. Doctors also were called from local practice into the armed services. First Aid classes were set up in local communities. I became interested in this and Clark County sent me to Pittsburg College to take a complete course in First Aid so I could teach First Aid in Clark County. I loved this and after completing the course, I came back and taught classes in First Aid in Menneola and Ashland for the duration of the war. This renewed my interest in teaching. As a result of the teacher shortage, I went back to teaching. I taught third and fourth grades in Bloom, Kansas for five years. I loved teaching after having children of my own!

Times marches on! This is such a brief account of the life in my big, happy family. Ours was a great heritage. As we came to the years of accountability, each one of us embraced the Christian faith as taught to us by our wonderful Christian parents. There was never a brush with the law or a breath of scandal in our family.

As I remember it, this is the way it was in the big, happy family in which I grew up. I attended each of their weddings and all of their funerals. Now, I am looking forward to a Happy Reunion with my wonderful family in Heaven.

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