Biography of Anders Pedersen Solem

Anders Pedersen Solem was born on October 18, 1862 in Soknedal, Norway. He was orphaned as a young child and raised by his grandparents. He completed the required public education of the day, which was the age of confirmation in the Lutheran Church (generally fourteen or fifteen years old). When Anders was 16 years old, he was encouraged to immigrate to America with an older neighbor who was leaving with a group from the same area. Former neighbors had already migrated to the Eau Claire and Menomonee area. With only four percent of Norway's land being arable, the rural culture had a dismal future to offer its youth. Moreover, Anders was the youngest of his siblings and his oldest brother inherited the farm in Norway. The family legend also notes that the grandparents were concerned because of the interest that Anders had expressed in their young servant girl. It was improper for a farm-owners son to marry from the class beneath him. However, it should be noted that the girl, Marit Larsen Oien (1862-1926), immigrated to Eau Claire three years later and she and Anders were married on September 29, 1883 in the parsonage of the First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Andrew sailed from Trondheim, Norway on May 6, 1879 to Hull, England on the ship “Tasso”, took a train to Liverpool, leaving for the United States on May 17 on the ship “Ohio”. He landed in Philadelphia on May 28, 1879 and was in Eau Claire by May 31. Anders worked at sawmills and lumber camps his first ten years in this country. He was then employed by Phoenix Manufacturing. After the manufacturing of traction vehicles for the lumbering industry came to a standstill, he worked as a chauffeur and gardener before obtaining employment at A. A. Cutter Co., which made shoes and boots. Anders and his wife were very anxious to learn English and, shortly after arriving in America, Anders began signing his name by the American version, Andrew, and Marit by the American version, Mary. He and Marit had nine children, born between 1884 and 1902. After Marit died in 1926, Andrew moved in with his eldest daughter, where he lived until his death on April 26, 1945.