

Eau Claire, September 8th, 81
My dear old friend! (Meaning Anders Olson Solem - Andrew's grand father)

After our last conversation together, I promised to write you and let you know how I live and feel. It has been a long time in fulfilling that promise, and that is mostly because I cannot write myself and am shy about asking others. So you must excuse me. As far as my health is concerned, I am well as usual. My eyes have also been good since I came here. AS far as my situation is concerned, I must say it is also good. I am living now with my son Nils and we rent a house from Peter Sneen as he bought a house this spring which you possibly had heard before.

Nils is also well and works at a sawmill here in town; has also now since the first of last month a considerably larger salary.

As you perhaps know, the working hours at the mills were 12 hours per day. People are of the opinion that this is too long a working-day. Of course in this were the people for the most part agreed, and they also who didn't want to force the issue. Monday morning the 18th of July, the workers in town and around the area refused to work if they didn't get a 10-hour work-day, and this they were denied. They then started riots and in less than an hour five large sawmills were stopped and the number of rioters grew quickly. There were to begin with only 300-400 men, but it soon grew to almost 1000. About noon they gathered at a spot in the city called the West Side Park, where a committee of two men from each mill was chosen to negotiate with the sawmill owners the next day concerning 10-hour days. The next day the rioter's numbers grew to about 15-1600. It was all rather quiet and peaceful. This continued for two weeks and the result was that a 10-hour day they could not get, rather their mills would go along in supporting the injured, but a little increase in wages they would get, and with that it ended. On the first of August all the mills were in full swing again. Anders Solem was not around here at that time.

He was in the woods then, but he is now down here on a quick trip and will go up again in the morning; so I can greet you from him, that he is well and doing well, and has up to now conducted himself respectably and properly, and remains as he was. There is no danger that he will other than manage well through time if misfortune does not become too great. He says he will write to you the first chance that he gets. Of news I do not have much to report; some are born and some die; and amongst the latter I can relate, as you probably have previously heard, that my brother's son Knut departed this sinful world through an abrupt and sudden death** a couple months ago.

Please greet them at home from me, as well as all at Solem.

B.N.Estenstad*

*Berit Nilsson Estenstad was a neighbor of the Solems.

** The nephew was Knut Pedersen Estenstad -- likely died in a sawmill accident, which was a frequent occurrence.