

A Brief History of the Charles Anderson Homestead

The history of the Anderson Homestead actually begins in southern Sweden. Charles Anderson was born in Gullspång, Sweden in 1869 (for the location click here:

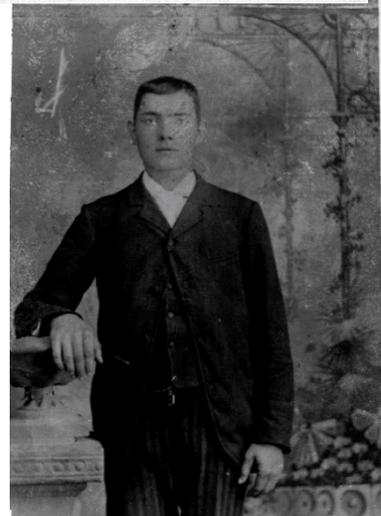
<http://www.maplandia.com/sweden/skaraborgslan/gullspang-kommun/gullspang/>) with the given

name of Carl Johan Sköld (See photo). Carl was the first born son of Anders and Christina Sköld (See photo). Carl immigrated to the United States in 1889 but changed his name upon entering probably because Sköld was difficult to pronounce in English. He changed his name to Anderson as his father's first name was Anders, hence, Anderson. Carl became Charles.



Anders and Christina Sköld

After several itinerant jobs in Michigan and North Dakota, he accepted the railroad's offer of free passage to the Black Hills in return for one's labor. He arrived in Deadwood in 1892. Deadwood was all decked out in patriotic red, white and blue bunting for South Dakota's first Presidential election as a new state. SD voted for the Republican candidate (Benjamin Harrison) who lost to Grover Cleveland (D). After working off his passage obligation to the railroad mainly working in Spearfish Canyon, he began work at the Golden Reward Mine near Terry, SD.



With the contacts made in Terry and Deadwood, Charles struck out on his own to seek his fortune. Charles began prospecting the headwaters area of Little Spearfish Creek where shafts into the hillsides are visible today. Charles is the stereotypical "Grubby" which is the name of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology mascot (see image). Grubby is the prospector who did the hard, lonely work of digging holes, prospecting and panning for gold with support from investors in town (grubstaked). The support was often not much more than food, tools and maybe paying for a few assays. Charles and Edwin Johnson from Terry, apparently had as many as 10 investors from town involved, but without hitting pay dirt the whole mining venture was over after about 2 years.



We can only speculate about the geologic information that guided him to this spring area at the base of the Madison Limestone and Englewood Formations. These formations are comprised of limestone and are wellknown as sedimentary rocks devoid of gold. Perhaps Charles knew about the reports of free gold (nuggets) that were found on the top of the Deadwood Formation, which underlies the Madison/Englewood

units. Free gold is found at this contact near Galena and Rockerville, SD. He would have known that flowing water was necessary to sluice gold from placer deposits. And that water was the limiting resource for the placer mining operations in Deadwood Gulch, Potato Creek, and Rockerville, as a few examples.

Despite extensive research in the South Dakota Historical Archives in Pierre, SD and the Bureau of Land Management in Billings Montana, no evidence can be found that Charles, or anyone else, filed a mining claim on the place. This seems unusual since he had been working and living there for almost 2 decades. The BLM in Billings is the agency that issues, and archives of all mining claims filed in the Black Hills area. Perhaps it was Charles' intention that if a discovery was made, he would then rush to file a claim.

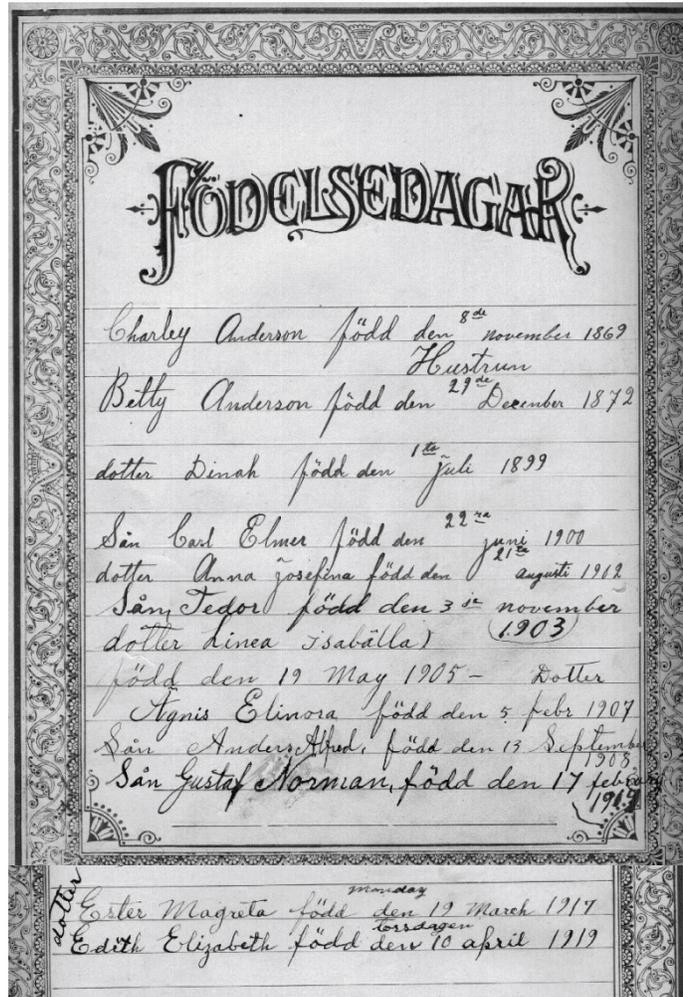
The other important contact Charles made while working at the Golden Reward mine was Betty Bloom. Betty was working as a cook at the Boarding house in Terry where many miners lived. Betty was also a recent immigrant from Scandinavia, but from Vaasa, Finland (the location of Vaasa is here: <http://www.maplandia.com/finland/vaasa/>). Vaasa (Vasa in Swedish) is a city on the west coast of Finland but is bilingual with most of the population speaking Finnish but about 25 percent of the residents speak Swedish. So, speaking the same language in a foreign land, it is easy to understand how they became attracted to one another. They were married in Whitewood, SD after a long buggy ride in 1898.

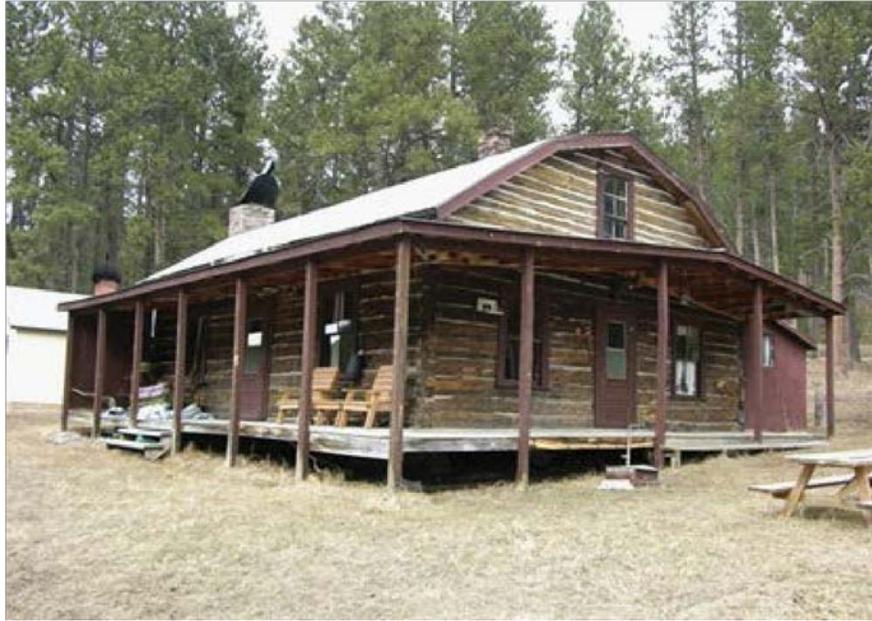
Exactly when Betty joined Charles at the Little Spearfish prospect site is unknown but their first child (Dinah) was born in 1899 but died only 6 months later, on Dec. 22nd, 1899 just 3 days before Christmas. Dinah is buried in the Terry Cemetery. The next child born was Elmer (see image from the family Bible) who was born on the place in 1900. Betty was assisted in childbirth for those born on the place by Mary Sager (Ben Sager's mother). There were no doctors nearby. The Sager's and Anderson's were long-time family friends no doubt solidified by this meaningful role. The Sager's homesteaded a place about 3 miles to the Northwest. Mary is Ben Sager's Sr. mother. The children came in succession— Ann (1902), Ted (1903), Isabelle (1905), Agnis (1907), and Andy (1908).

Norman (1914), Ester (1917), Edith (1919) were born in Lead or Spearfish but all grew up on the place and considered it home. The first "home" was more of a miner's shack, with only blankets hung to separate a couple of rooms. No insulation of course. This place mainly broke the wind.

With children arriving every 2 years, it became clear the miners shack couldn't hold the burgeoning family. So, work began on a new larger home about 1909. The log house was built over several years (See photo).

The log house employed a dovetail joint design and used logs from National Forest land, identified by the "U.S." stamp on several log ends. The design and craftsmanship for the construction of the house was provided by an itinerant Finnish craftsman (Eric Kulleen, spelled phonetically). The family moved into the new log house about 1912 from a very modest miners shack, now long gone, down by the creek. This would have been a very significant investment in those days and, interestingly, the house was built without title to the property. At the same time, the family would have known that a place could be homesteaded and a deed granted only after living on the place for 5 years.





The log home still stands today on the homestead.

The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 established a role for the Federal government in land management of western forests. The Black Hills Forest Reserve was created in 1897, later renamed the Black Hills National Forest in 1907 with the creation of the US Forest Service as an agency. Soon forest rangers appeared in the field and began limiting what could be done with the place and the adjacent lands. Those limitations, although not specific in family history, created friction and a residual suspicion about Forest Service actions and intentions.

With encouragement from others, Charles made the decision to seek title to the place under the Homestead Act of 1862. Settlers could obtain 160 acres for a small filing fee after 5 years of continuous residency. A unique option within the boundaries of the newly established Black Hills National Forest, was that a settler could claim 1 linear mile of valley bottom, whatever the acreage less than 160, rather than 160 acres square. Valley bottom land, needless to say, with grass and deeper soil for cultivation was more likely to support a family than forested hillsides. The section lines in the area were surveyed in 1906, but the Homestead was not surveyed until 1914 by Chester Campbell, a surveyor for the Forest Service. The Homestead was surveyed by a method of meets and bounds— so many chains along this heading, thence so many chains along this heading and so on until closing back at the start (see Plat). It is interesting to note the amount of detail included on the surveyors plat, such as location of house, barn, outbuildings, springs and reservoirs.

With a survey and plat, Charles was formally granted a Homestead Deed (Patent 587690) on June 9, 1917 to 1 mile of valley bottom amounting to 52.3 acres by signature of President Woodrow Wilson (see document). The family consisting of 11 members (see photo) lived on the place for most of the next 4 decades, with the exception of periods when Betty lived off-site, so the children could attend school or Charles pursued work in the area.



The family members who lived and worked at the Anderson Homestead. This photo was probably taken in the late 1930s. Elmer (missing) passed away in Kansas City, MO having succumbed to the 1918 influenza epidemic while attending the Sweeney Auto and Tractor School to learn about this new technology of the internal combustion engine. The unique aspect of this flu is that it hit healthy young adults the hardest. The flu was brought back to the United States by troops returning from Europe after WWI being mustered out of service in Fort Leavenworth, KS. Because of the fear and panic caused by this deadly influenza epidemic, the bodies of the dead were not allowed to be transported. Hence, Elmer is buried in an unmarked grave in Kansas City not far from the Baptist Church at Linwood and Park Street. Imagine the heartbreak of losing your first-born son and not being able to give him a proper burial. Edith was the last surviving member of the family and passed away in 2013 at the age of 94.



Charles and Betty at the place later in life.

Most remarkable in retrospect is how resourceful the family was to make a living and raise such a large family at this high altitude, with a very short growing season, abundant snowfall, very limited access to goods and services, employment, social contact and entertainment. Potatoes and carrots could be cultivated but not much else but hay. The family operated a dairy of sorts, selling milk, cream and butter to neighbors. Betty also make treks into Spearfish on the train, she boarded at Savoy, to sell eggs and milk. Everybody helped by gathering firewood, cooking meals or taking jobs on road building projects in the area, the Tinton mine or whatever. It helps explain the cohesion of the family, self-reliance and entertainment with poetry and music. Charles passed away on April 1, 1946 in Sheridan, WY at the home of his daughter Agnes while seeking medical treatment ([Charles Obituary below](#)). Betty passed away on Oct. 28, 1952 at the hospital in Deadwood ([Betty Obituary below](#)). Charles and Betty are buried in the Mountain Lawn Cemetery (also known as the Englewood Cemetery) several miles south of Lead along the Rochford Rd. Several of their children also are buried nearby: Esther (Anderson) Nash; Isabelle (Anderson) Anderson and Norman Gustave Anderson.

This concludes the early history of establishment of the Anderson Homestead and the family that settled the place.

**HILLS PIONEER DIES
IN SHERIDAN, WYO.
FUNERAL IN LEAD**

Funeral services for the late Charles Anderson, Black Hills pioneer, and former Lead resident, will be held from the chapel of the Rounsevell funeral home Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock. The Rev. R. A. Olsen, pastor, will conduct the rites. Interment will be in Mountain Lawn cemetery.

Anderson died Monday noon at the age of 77 years at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Agnes Tibbs, at Sheridan, Wyo. He had been in failing health for some time, and had gone there recently to visit. During the winter months the family had been making their home at 623½ West Main, moving in from their homestead ranch at the head of Little Spearfish creek. His wife and several of his children were at his bedside at the time of his passing. The body is being brought here from Sheridan.

The deceased was born at Gulspung, Sweden, on November 3, 1869. He came to America in 1889, living for three years in Michigan and Wisconsin, and came to the Black Hills in 1892, as an employe of the first railroad built into the Hills. He also worked for the Homestake Mining company for a few years and on January 29, 1899, was united in marriage to Betty Bloom. After a residence of two years in Terry he took up a homestead at the head of Little Spearfish which has since been the family home.

In addition to his wife, Anderson is survived by eight children, five daughters and three sons. They are: Mrs. Ann Oslund, Mrs. Isabelle Gullickson, and Mrs. Edith Curry, all of Lead; Mrs. Esther Nash, Nevada Gulch; Mrs. Agnes Tibbs of Sheridan, Wyo.; Ted Anderson, Rapid City, Andrew and Norman Anderson of Lead. Two children preceded him in death. They were Dinna, who died in infancy, and Elmer, who died in 1918 at the age of 18 years. Other survivors include 15 grandchildren, a brother and several sisters living in Sweden.

Charles Anderson obit in Lead Daily Call April 3, 1946

Clipped By:



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Sat, Nov 30, 2019

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Pioneer Resident Dies In Deadwood

Mrs. Betty Anderson, 79-year-old pioneer resident of this area, died Tuesday evening at St. Joseph's Hospital in Deadwood.

The former Betty Bloom was born Dec. 29, 1872, in Sweden and came to the United States when a young girl, settling in Terry. In 1899 she was married to Charles Anderson. The couple lived in Terry for two years before moving to Little Spearfish canyon where they homesteaded.

Following her husband's death, April 1, 1946, Mrs. Anderson lived intermittently with her children and on the home ranch on Little Spearfish.

She leaves to survive, five daughters, Mrs. Isabel Gullickson and Mrs. Edith Curry, Lead; Mrs. Ann Oslund, Rapid City; Mrs. Agnes Tibbs, Spearfish, and Mrs. Esther Nash, Black Hawk, and three sons, Ted Anderson, Rapid City; Andy Anderson, Spearfish, and Norman Anderson, residing on the ranch on Little Spearfish. A son, Elmer, preceded her in death in 1918, and a daughter, Dinna, died in infancy. Several nieces survive in Minnesota and 19 grandchildren and one great-grandchild also survive.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed. The body is at Wells Funeral home in Deadwood.

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