



Diary of a Swedish Immigrant Horticulturist, 1855-1898

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UNIQUE IN the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, and probably one of the few of its kind anywhere, is the multi-volume Swedish folk-language diary faithfully kept for forty-three years by Andrew Peterson of Laketown Township, Carver County, Minnesota. This pioneer farmer, horticulturist, man-of-all-

trades, Swedish Baptist, and diarist lived for most of the years of the diary on his farm adjoining Waconia Lake, then known as Clearwater Lake. He not only mastered diversified farming but also became a leading horticulturist of the entire Upper Mississippi Valley. Besides winning recognition from the Minnesota Horticultural Society, which made him an honorary life member in 1888, Peterson achieved genuine prestige among the fraternity of fruit growers and agricultural experiment station staff members in the region.

¹ Vilhelm Moberg, *Den Okända Släkten*, 39-61 (Stockholm, 1950); *Smaalandstidningen*, December 28, 1961; American Swedish News Exchange news release of May 26, 1960. See also Vilhelm Moberg, "Why I wrote *The Emigrants*," in *Industria International*, 1964, p. 64, and the same author's "Why I Wrote the Novel About Swedish Emigrants," in *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, 17:67 (April, 1966). An English translation by Emma M. Ahlquist is included with the diaries, which were presented to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1939 by the Peterson family through the courtesy of Joseph Ball, then of St. Paul, and Professor William H. Alderman of the University of Minnesota College of Agriculture. See *Minnesota History*, 21:85 (March, 1940).

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Some fifty years after Peterson's death just before the turn of the century, his diary received prominent notice when the prestigious Swedish novelist, Vilhelm Moberg, acknowledged its use in the preparation of his trilogy of novels concerning Swedish emigrants — *The Emigrants* (1951), *Unto a Good Land* (1954), and *The Last Letter Home* (1961). In fact, the character Karl Oskar in the Moberg novels is said to have been modeled after Peterson.¹

One gains a remarkable cumulative impression, a

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sense of creative living, from reading the entries that Peterson made day after day, week after week, year after year, for the forty-three years from 1855 until two days before his death on March 31, 1898. He did not fight nature; he became its partner and shared in its tragedies and beauties. With his strong Baptist faith in the wisdom and watchfulness of his God, he used his considerable talents to the limit of his ability. Even in later years when cardiac trouble limited his physical activities, he kept up his efforts to seek better ways of producing better crops, especially apples.

Andrew Peterson was born on October 20, 1818, in Sjöarp, in Östergötland, Sweden, the son of a farmer (*bonde*). He emigrated in 1849 or 1850, and we next learn of him at Burlington, Iowa, in 1855. What he did in the United States before this time is not clear, but on January 1, 1855, he was working near Burlington for a nurseryman named Neally, doing carpentry work and grafting. The daily entries in the diary record only "for Neally nursery" until April 30, 1855, when he wrote: "Made up accounts with Neally and received \$38.00."

Membership in a small Swedish Baptist group led to Peterson's leaving Neally's employ. The group was led by Fredrik Olaus Nilsson, Sweden's first Baptist convert who had been prosecuted under the infamous Konventikalplakat of 1726 which prohibited unauthorized religious gatherings. With a small band of followers, Nilsson emigrated to the United States, settled briefly in Burlington, Iowa, and then moved to Carver County, Minnesota.² Peterson went along and recorded in his diary the trip via steamboat to Rock Island, Galena, and St. Paul. The diarist was ill on arrival and remained in St. Paul from May 9 to May 22, 1855, while the others journeyed on the "Black Hawk" up the Minnesota River. While recuperating, he recorded carefully all his expenses en route from Burlington, his outlays for medicine and food, and his extensive purchases of equipment for himself and members of the group. On May 15, for example, he itemized medicines for a total of \$2.45, food to the amount of \$4.45, and deck passage from Burlington to St. Paul, including chest, at \$8.23.³

At last he "went up the Minnesota river," and on June 1 wrote: "Today I bought a claim from the German [Peter Fisher] for \$25.00." It was on the eastern edge of Minnesota's Big Woods. The next day he added: "Today I planted potatoes on my claim using the grubhoe." He then told how he cleared the ground for a cabin and cut logs. Frequently during his first year on his claim Peterson interrupted work on his own place to help Nilsson build his cabin. In return he ate his meals with the minister and his wife.⁴ On August 1 Peterson wrote in his diary, "We organized

into a church." He found time to work on his home, too. On October 19 he wrote: "In the morning I finished chinking my cabin," and three days later he "finished daubing the cabin and the roof." He then built a cowshed and, in the Swedish manner, covered it with hay. Finally, on November 15, he noted that he moved into his cabin.

Until his marriage on September 15, 1858, Peterson boarded or "bached it," but there was little difference in his way of life before or after getting married. From 1856 until his death, in fact, he continued his yearly routines with little variation except for increasing preoccupation with horticulture. During the winter weeks of 1856 he cut rails for fences, and on March 11, 1856, he wrote: "Cut rails all day. Have now 2,000 rails." A week later another annual item appeared: "Made wooden troughs in which to gather maple sap." On May 20 his entry was "Last night we fished. Got the boat full. Got home at noon. Then I planted potatoes and grubbed the place for my cornfield." On May 23: "We church folks planted corn for Nilsson."

Several entries during the remainder of 1856 indicate his range of activities. On June 7 "afternoon — we had a language meeting at Bengtsen." On July 1, 7, and 9 he took Nilsson's mare to one Kessler's horse but without result. In late July he needed money, so he went to Carver and got a job "at Noyes" from August 2 to August 16. With the money, on August 19, he "went to St. Paul and bought a stove and provisions," traveling on the steamboat "Wave" from Carver. On August 29 he stated: "Today I began to feed myself." On August 30 he "picked cranberries," which no doubt helped vary his diet. On October 11 he received his first recognition as a local citizen: "Received our order from the County Commissioner that I have been appointed road supervisor." He finished digging his potatoes, he wrote on October 18, and "took over four bushels to Johannes [his brother-in-law] to be made into starch. I got about 30 bushels of potatoes from the four bushels planted. Lundsten gave me a half-pound of butter for my old songbook." On November 22 he wrote: "My cow calved yesterday. It was a heifer."

² Louise J. Ahlstrom, *Eighty Years of Swedish Baptist Work in Iowa, 1853-1933*, 107-108 (Des Moines, 1933). See also Grace Lee Nute, "The Diaries of a Swedish-American Farmer, Andrew Peterson," in American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature and Science, *Yearbook*, 1945, p. 105-132.

³ The diary entry for May 15, 1855, reads: "Bought carpentry tools to take along to St. Peter. Those we all went together for . . . Total \$15.20. Bought for myself . . . Total \$4.10."

⁴ See manuscript diary of Reverend F. O. Nilsson, in possession of Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul (the Minnesota Historical Society has a copy).

On December 6 he made an important entry: "I proved up my claim in Minneapolis."

The shared-work system on the frontier is well illustrated by this unusually long entry of November 28, 1856:

"Borrowed Jonas Broberg's oxen to haul logs for the fence on the other side of the maples. Alfred was here with his oxen and hauled logs. He owed me 2½ days work. One day I counted off for the oxen and the half-day I counted off for the sinkers he made for the seine and the mending of the net. In the evening Nilsson and I made up our account for the last period of boarding and the 6½ days of work I had done and the boards I had given that should count off when I built his cow shed because of the board I had when I built mine."

Co-operative effort was again evident on April 1, 1857: "In the morning I went over to Johannes and we made up our accounts both old and new. We are now square except that Johannes still owes me \$3.00 for corn." In the spring of 1857, too, Peterson recorded daily his first large-scale operation to produce maple sap and syrup. On March 31 he wrote: "In all there are 66 maples tapped for syrup."

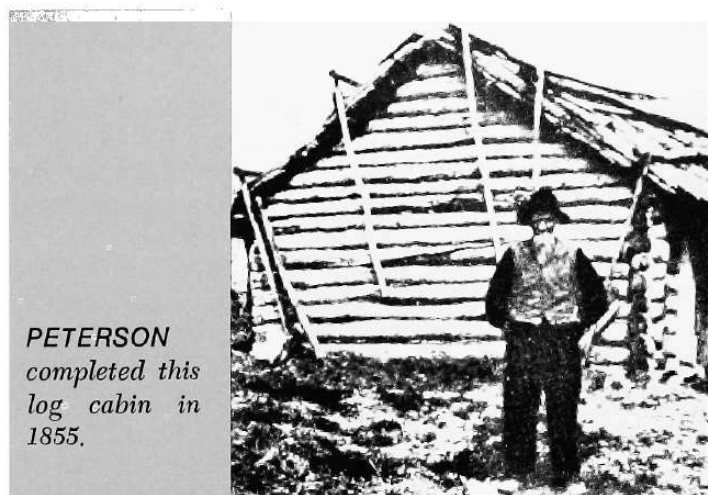
PETERSON'S horticultural activity, begun in 1856, was stepped up in the spring of 1857 when on May 19 he "went to Carver after a grafting box." On each of the next four days he planted apple grafts. His apprenticeship at Neally's had begun to pay off. The next spring, during April and May, 1858, he recorded receiving a box of grafts and planting them with appropriate labels for each.

Meanwhile, he continued his language lessons. A curious entry for July 18, 1857, contains a modern-sounding note: "Had a language meeting and then a love feast all day," presumably a Baptist affair. In the fall of 1857 he spent considerable time helping build a church, and on May 21, 1858, he attended a meeting "to organize a public school and decide where to build the school house."

The entry for September 15, 1858, is notable for its laconic report of romance on the frontier. "In the morning I was over at Johannes and chopped corn-

⁵ United States Census, 1860, Carver County, Town of Laketown, manuscript schedules, gives Elsa's age as twenty-five, two years after her marriage.

⁶ United States Census, 1860, population, manuscript schedules, Carver County, Town of Laketown. The manuscript agricultural schedules for the United States censuses of 1870 and 1880 show rapid expansion of Peterson's enterprises and income. The 1880 report especially indicates an impressive variety of produce and income.



PETERSON
completed this
log cabin in
1855.

stalks," Peterson wrote. "At noon John went with me home and started plowing for the wheat. In the evening at 5 o'clock Elsa and my expectations became a reality, a marriage." Business went on as usual, for the next day he wrote: "John was here and plowed and I cut corn. Also went to Bengsten for seed wheat." On September 17 he "sowed and harrowed wheat" and the next day "cut down the corn. Elsa . . . helped me. In the afternoon we went to a prayer meeting in preparation for the Conference."

Andrew was nearly 40 years old. Elsa Ingeman was 23 when she married Andrew Peterson.⁵ Nine children were born to them, but all died without issue, despite some marriages. The diary for August 5, 1859, recorded the first child: "12:30 a girl. Ida Gustava was born and all is well."

The back-breaking work of grubbing trees and tree stumps and clearing land for cultivation continued annually. So did the planting of apple grafts, sowing of grains, planting and cultivating of corn, harvesting, threshing, fall plowing and planting, corn picking, winter butchering, manure hauling, cutting of cordwood for sale, construction of a new home and barns, fencing, road making, and participating in regular church and school activities. The census of 1860 valued Peterson's real estate at \$600 and his personal property at \$200.⁶

Few things in the diary are more impressive than Peterson's preoccupation with his work during the Civil War and the Sioux Uprising of 1862. Nowhere does he discuss the issues of either event. On September 26, 1861, Peterson wrote: "According to the government proclamation we had a day of fasting and prayer"—the diary's first allusion to the war. He mentioned the Sioux Uprising on August 20, 1862: "We had an Indian scare so we fled out on the island in Clearwater [Waconia] Lake. We stayed until evening on the 21st, then went

home." On August 24 he added: "Sunday. Just as we started the meeting, Andrew Swenson came and told us we must leave at once to fight the Indians. The meeting broke up and we all hurried home to get ready but then we decided to wait for more definite orders." The next day he "went to Nobles' for a meeting and to be examined by the Doctor to find out if I was fit for war duty." Again on September 5 he wrote: "Did nothing as we had another Indian scare. We carried our belongings out in the brush and we intended to flee to St. Paul." But on Sunday, September 7, he recorded: "We are more peaceful about the Indians today." He made no further entries in the diary concerning Indian trouble.

As for the Civil War, Peterson recorded a "day of repentance and prayer" on April 30, 1862, proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln. On July 4, 1863, he wrote: "We had a meeting and took up a subscription for the three that have been drafted for the war. I promised \$40.00." Again on November 24, 1864, he obeyed the president's request for a day of prayer. Finally, on January 19, 1865, he once more touched upon the war: "J. A. Peterson and I went to Carver and Chaska. The sergeant wrote out an affidavit that I was too old to go to war." On January 27, he wrote: "Went to Carver and was excused from the draft."

To this Swedish immigrant farmer the Civil War must have been remote and irrelevant. Most of the entries in the diary during the war years deal with the same matters as entries of other years, before and after: maple syrup, apple grafting, the calving of his cows (each with a name like Kulla, Nebba, Lady, and Betty), acquisition of farm fowl and animals (one ewe had twins on January 26, 1864), grape planting, soap making, harvesting, and other endless farm chores.

Peterson clearly was becoming a successful farmer, thanks in part to increased diversification which insured a multiple income as well as subsistence. He produced wheat, oats, barley, corn, alfalfa, potatoes, rutabagas, vegetables of all types, sugar beets, many varieties of apples, pears, grapes, plums, cherries, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, currants, maple syrup, molasses, wine, eggs, butter, cream, milk, cattle, swine, sheep, geese, poultry, cordwood, logs, and no doubt other products not mentioned in the diary. He annually exhibited at both the Carver County Fair and the Minnesota State Fair and won cash prizes that he recorded. In June, 1867, he started the foundation for a new home but was unable to move in until November 14, 1870. Meanwhile, on June 9, 1868, he could afford "a new wagon for \$85.00."

On September 3, 1872, Peterson wrote about an interesting bargain he made with a Chaska doctor. "If he could remove the growth that Anna has, I will



ELSA PETERSON

pay him \$25.00," Peterson said, "but if he was not successful, he is to have nothing, not one cent." What modern doctor would make such a deal? On November 5, 1872, he wrote: "In the morning I went to the election. We Swedes voted for Grant for President."

PETERSON'S ATTENTION was increasingly devoted to horticulture. Thus in October and November, 1871, he spent every day in the orchard. The work was broken only by a trip to orchards at Excelsior on October 24 to get apple trees. He was experimenting to determine which varieties could survive Minnesota's winters and which could resist blight. Regularly after the maple season he grafted apple tree roots and later also pears and grapes. He obtained scions of as many varieties as he could get. On March 8, 1873, he wrote: "This winter I have grafted 404 apple trees, 13 pear trees, 30 plum trees, and 12 cherry trees." Each fall he dug up the small apple trees and the grape roots, dug trenches, and "heeled them in" for the winter.

He did not escape the notorious grasshopper invasions of the 1870s. On August 19, 1876, he recorded that "the grasshoppers began to come and since then more have come every day." By August 31 "the air was so full of them that when you looked at the sun it looked as if it was snowing." The grasshoppers arrived again in 1877, and he set the children to catching them. On July 20, 1877, "the grasshoppers that came on the 15th left today."

A result of Peterson's increasingly large-scale apple growing was that buyers began to visit him to purchase his young trees. Although he sold harvested apples by the box in nearby markets, he realized his principal income from selling young trees, seedlings, grafts, and scions, starting at least as early as 1873

and increasingly from 1875. For example, he wrote on September 29, 1875: "The apple tree agents from Minneapolis are here today." Numerous other entries afterward recorded sales of trees to visiting purchasers.

Peterson began apple tree shipments, too, to nurserymen in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin and started correspondence in 1887 with such agricultural experiment men as Professor J. L. Budd of Ames, Iowa, and Professor Samuel B. Green of St. Anthony Park, Minnesota.⁷ Among nurserymen he mentioned dealing with were F. G. Gould of Excelsior, Charles Hawkinson of the Rose Hill Nursey of St. Paul, Clarence Wedge of Albert Lea, O. F. Brand of Faribault, Oliver Gibbs of Lake City, A. Holtz of Brainerd, J. S. Harris of La Crescent, C. G. Patten of Charles City, Iowa, and K. K. Phoenix of Delavan, Wisconsin.

There are several diary entries regarding business with nurserymen. On August 28, 1883, for instance, Peterson wrote: "Today Oliver Gibbs from Lake City came here. I gave him seven kinds of the Russian apples that are to be sent to the large exhibition [of the American Pomological Society] to be held in Philadelphia, September 12, 1883." Gibbs was then the secretary of the Minnesota Horticultural Society. On November 9, 1883, the diarist recorded: "After dinner secretary Gibbs . . . and Mr. Gould . . . were here and I gave them scions from the Russian apples for distribution to the horticultural society. I gave them scions from the Hibernial, Lieby, Ostrakoff Glass, and Charlamoff." On September 30, 1884, he mentioned: "I went to Gould . . . with apples that are to be sent to the World Industrial Exposition in New Orleans." His horizons were indeed widening.

In 1884 Peterson became a member of the Minnesota Horticultural Society, which was incorporated in 1877. On January 14, 1884, he wrote: "Today I went down on the train to Minneapolis to the state horticultural meeting, and I brought down with me the following apples for display: one peck of Wealthy, #240 Lieby, #378 Hibernial, #410 Little Seedling, #472 Ostrakoff Glass." He planted Russian apple trees on May 1, 1884, and on May 24 "top-grafted after din-

ner"—his first mention of so doing. Most of his grafts had been on the roots. On January 10, 1885, he received scions he had requested earlier from Sweden: "200 apples, pears, plums, and cherry scions." Only one variety of Swedish apples, however, survived Minnesota's climate.

"I made a box in which to pack my apples for taking to the horticulture meeting in St. Paul," he wrote on January 14, 1885. He attended the meetings on January 19-24, and on June 19, 1885, and sent in a report to the society which was subsequently published.⁸ In it he stated that the winter damage had been severe. "The Christmas seems hardy," he said. "The varieties that withstood the winter are the following: Hibernial, Ostrakoff Glass, Charlamoff, Lieby. All of these look as nice as before, and there is a great deal of fruit on the trees."

The horticultural society published another report by Peterson in 1886. Again he wrote favorably of the four varieties of Russian apples, but he found less good things to say of Wealthy trees. The Russian White Astrakhan, he said, "is hardier than the Duchess and is a good bearer." He added: "The small Russian trees I received from Prof. Budd were colored some, but not much, and also the Russian plums." In 1887 Peterson wrote that he could not send apples to the society's exhibition "because they are all gone." Once more, however, he lauded the Russian apples. "All the young trees of the new Russians, about thirty-five varieties, look very nice," he said. "Also the Russian pear trees show no damage yet. Among the sixty varieties imported from Sweden there is only one among them which is hardy enough for Minnesota."⁹

The society in 1888 published a long essay by Peterson entitled "Report on Russian Apples," dated at Waconia December 21, 1887.¹⁰ The author stated that the winter of 1886-87 had caused severe damage to his trees, especially to the Wealthy and the Duchess. Again it was the Russian varieties that survived. The Russian trees supplied by Professor Budd "did not sustain any damage at all, and they seem hardy enough for Minnesota," Peterson wrote. He listed many varieties that did not prove hardy enough. Once more he mentioned one variety from Sweden that was "as hardy as any Russian, and as it is a long keeper in Sweden, I think a good deal of the tree."

In 1889 Peterson's letter to the society stated that 1888 was a good crop year.¹¹ "The oldest tree of the Lieby bore two barrels of apples," he said, and some eight-year-old Liebys "also bore a heavy crop." The Charlamoff, Christmas, and Plikanoff bore well, too. Peterson wrote that O. F. Brand "is mistaken concerning the hardiness in trees of the Duchess and Lieby in my orchard. Duchess will never equal the Lieby in hardi-

⁷ Samuel Bowdlear Green (1859-1910) was a member of the staff of the State Experiment Farm, St. Anthony Park, from its establishment in 1887, became a member of the faculty in horticulture and applied botany of the School of Agriculture, and finally professor of horticulture and forestry in the College of Agriculture, University of Minnesota. Green Hall on the St. Paul campus is named for him.

⁸ Minnesota Horticulture Society, *Annual Report*, 1886, p. 31-32, 169, hereafter cited as *Report*.

⁹ *Report*, 1887, p. 350.

¹⁰ *Report*, 1888, p. 117-118.

¹¹ *Report*, 1889, p. 132-133.

ness. My oldest Duchess and Lieby trees are of the same age, about fifteen years. The Duchess trees are more than half dead and some of those remaining are nearly dead, but the Lieby is yet sound. . . . So I would rather plant Lieby than Duchess. . . . The Christmas apples seem to me just as hardy as the Duchess. It had a heavy crop this year with very nice fruit; and I have some of them yet which are as fresh as when I picked them, so I think they will keep until February."

Peterson's reports of 1890 and 1892 were in the same vein, the former especially praising the Russian Christmas apple tree.¹² "If I should call any of the Russians blight proof," he wrote, "it would be the Christmas apple. The tree is now sixteen years old and has never blighted."

Peterson's last printed essay — also his longest and most detailed — was entitled simply "Russian Apples." The society published it in 1893. He stated that he had tried over a hundred varieties of Russian apples and had had good experiences with the Christmas, Plikanoff, Lieby, Hibernial, Charlanoff, "one of the best eating apples of all the Russians," and Ostrakoff Glass. He also liked the English Borovinka and "shall plant them instead of the Duchess." He noted that "of the five varieties I got from C. G. Patten, Charles City, Iowa, those he called Patten's Greenings are the best." He also gave judgments of several other varieties.

Finally, he wrote: "In Prof. S. B. Green's report in the 'F. S. & Home' of Sept. 15, '91, is a little mistake. He says I commenced selling apple trees in 1872. I

THIS HOUSE was Peterson's home from 1870 until his death in 1898. The building is substantially unchanged, but the orchards are now gone.



think he misunderstood me when I said I planted the first Russian apple tree 18 years ago. I commenced planting apple grafts in 1856. That spring I planted a thousand — bought from Neally's nursery, Burlington, Iowa, the same nursery that I worked in before, and in 1857, I bought another thousand grafts, altogether about 50 or 60 varieties, and of all these there were only the Fameuse, Rawles Janet, and Pumpkin Sweet I could grow big enough for bearing, and they bore a good crop for a few years, but then they died."

The *Farm, Stock and Home* article to which Peterson referred was entitled "Apples to Plant." In it Professor Samuel B. Green of the University of Minnesota gave a long account of his visit to the Peterson farm, accompanied by President Wyman Elliot of the Minnesota Horticultural Society, presumably in the summer of 1891.¹³ "His whole farm shows systematic care and intelligent management," Green wrote. "It was the orchard, however, that we were most interested in and came to see. Mr. Peterson showed us every attention and spent several hours with us in his orchard. In whatever he told us we were impressed with his impartiality, discrimination and thorough knowledge of the subject." Green then recorded his notes of Peterson's comments about various kinds of apples.

POLITICALLY, Peterson changed his allegiance as time went on. Although he voted the Republican ticket in 1868 and 1872, as recorded in his diary, he wrote on February 3, 1874: "This evening our Grange was organized." More conclusively, he reported on January 31, 1885, that "I attended the Farmers Alliance meeting in our school house in the afternoon." On November 4, 1890, he wrote: "This morning Axel, Frank and I went to the election when we voted the Alliance's ticket." On May 9, 1891, he recorded that he attended another Alliance meeting, and on August 30, 1892, wrote: "In the afternoon we went to Waconia and listened to a political speech by Ignatius Donnelly." Again on July 7, 1893, he "went to Waconia to the People's Party convention." He made no mention, however, of issues or of why he supported the Populists.

Peterson and his family also took part in the prohibition movement, as shown in the diary entries of July 3, 1888 ("Carl went to the prohibition convention held in the Carver settlement") and August 1, 1888 ("Today the prohibitionists had a subscription festival and steamboat rides on Clearwater Lake. Our people were all there. I stayed home and hoed around the apple grafts"). He apparently felt no conflict of inter-

¹² *Report*, 1890, p. 324-325; 1892, p. 142-144.

¹³ *Farm, Stock and Home*, September 15, 1891, p. 360.

est between this activity and the annual supply of wine produced from his grapes.

From the earliest years of his diary, Peterson reported frequently that "I am not well." His self-diagnosis was palpitation of the heart. To cure or ease it, he resorted to "cupping."¹⁴ On November 28, 1883, he reported: "Today I received the cupping machine together with the oil and the book from Cleveland, Ohio, that I ordered." On February 13, 1884, he wrote: "My heart kept bothering me until 11 o'clock when I used the cupping machine on myself and my heart quieted down." He usually stayed in bed a day following such a cupping. He cupped his wife and children, too, when they were ill. In fact, although illness was frequent in the family, Peterson rarely mentioned in his diary any visits by or to a qualified doctor of medicine. On February 5, 1889, he recorded the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Reitz who gave his daughter Emma "homeopathic medicine." And on September 25, 1889, "Albertina Nilsson dosed Mamma, Ida, Josephine and myself." On October 1 the same woman "dosed the larger part of the family" and six days later "was here again and dosed us." Peterson did make use of a dentist in Young America to extract his teeth and fit him with dentures.

Tragedy struck from time to time in the small Swedish settlement. On November 18, 1887, for example, Peterson recorded the death of his brother-in-law Johannes, whose wife also died shortly after. She was Andrew's sister Maria Christina, known affectionately as "Maja Stina." But Andrew was most hurt on September 19, 1889: "Today we met with an intense sorrow when our daughter Anna Isabelle died . . . at the age of 17 years, 4 months, and 5 days." He wrote at length of religious consolation. No other members of the immediate family died before Andrew did.

As Peterson entered the 1890s, more and more of the farm work and even the care of the orchards was taken over by his sons. He acquired a farm near Granite Falls for them and also bought a town lot in Minneapolis. Earlier he had received legacies from the deaths of his brothers Samuel and Rydell in Sweden and of another, Carl, in Colorado. He had become a man of affluence and could look back on an extraordinarily useful and successful life.

Peterson kept his diary faithfully until the end, although entries became shorter in his last years. He also remained an experimenter, as is indicated by an entry for January 23, 1891: "I finished making a machine in which I can twist hay into rope. I want to use the rope to wind around the apple trees." The fol-

lowing entry for May 31, 1892, and three later ones bear out even more significantly his unflagging interest in experimentation: "Today Prof. Green . . . came to hybridize the apple blossoms. He and his farm hand worked with that all day, and I helped every once in a while." On June 30 he wrote: "Prof. Green . . . was here today and put mosquito netting over the hybridized trees." On December 28, 1892, he recorded: "I smeared the apple trees with liver to protect them from rabbits." On May 16, 1894, he wrote: "Today I crossed some of the apple flowers, Borovinka into Wolf's Seedlings, Christmas and Royal Table, and then I crossed Wolf's Seedling into Borovinka."

In January, 1898, he made apple grafts as usual, and on February 4 he wrote: "I made the last of the apple grafts." On March 1 there was a snowstorm, and on March 15 he "made mortar to set the evaporator pans on the outdoor stove at the syrup camp. I also cleaned the stoves. It was blowing hard." He noted "beautiful weather" for several of the days of his last month. The final entry in the diary was on March 29, 1898: "The boys hauled manure. I was in bed. It is clear weather but not mild weather." He died two days later.

The Minnesota Horticultural Society's *Annual Report* for 1898 carried Peterson's photograph as the frontispiece of the May, 1898, installment as well as tributes from the secretary, who emphasized Peterson's associations with the society, and Professor Samuel B. Green, whose comments were especially discerning. They are worth quoting in full: "Andrew Peterson was a man of sterling integrity and a lover of everything that he believed worked for the building up of Christian character. He loved truth, he was patient, thorough, persistent, careful and enterprising. In his very successful efforts to better Minnesota horticulture, all these features of his character were prominent, 'For his heart was in his work, and the heart giveth grace unto every art.'

"Soon after Mr. Peterson came to Minnesota he set out quite an orchard, and among the trees were some Hibernial, which had then been recently imported from Russia in the attempt to get varieties that were adapted to this section where all those of the old list had failed. These Hibernial trees are the oldest of this variety in the state. They have now been standing about twenty-five years and have borne regularly large crops of good fruit and are now sound and good in every particular. During the last fifteen years they have attracted much attention as one of the most encouraging signs of the evolution of a system of horticulture adapted to this section. A little later Mr. Peterson planted a large number of varieties of Russian apples and brought into favorable notice the Anisim, Peter-

¹⁴ Cupping seems to have involved drawing blood to the surface of any area of the body affected.

son's Charlamoff, Cross and Christmas. He also tried many native seedlings and Swedish varieties. I think he must have tried more than one hundred kinds of apples. He did not plant every variety sent out but only those that were especially promising. His location in Carver County was so far north that his experiments were of unusual interest and value to the people of Minnesota. His work, in fact, amounted to his carrying on at his own expense and in a most careful way for more than a quarter of a century what amounted to a private experiment station. He proved to the people of Minnesota that apples could be profitably grown in this section; that some of the varieties imported from Russia were especially adapted to this section and could be depended upon. He also showed that many of them were worthless, and his labor of sifting

the good from the bad Russian varieties of apples has been very helpful and valuable. He was a natural investigator and freely imparted the results of his experience. His reports to the horticultural society from year to year have done much to encourage the development of pomology in Minnesota and surrounding states."¹⁵

¹⁵ *Report*, 1898, p. 193-194.

THE PHOTOGRAPH of Peterson on page 63 is from Minnesota Horticultural Society, *The Minnesota Horticulturist*, 26: 163 (facing) (May, 1898); those on pages 65 and 66 are from American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature, and Science, *Yearbook*, 1945, p. 106; that on page 68 was taken by the author.

THE editor's page

YELLOWSTONE TO VOYAGEURS: THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEA

THE IDEA of a national park, insofar as it is part of the historical record, can be traced to George Catlin, the famous artist-explorer of the American West. Back in 1832 Catlin had in mind setting aside the whole wind-swept prairie of the buffalo and the Indian—extending from Mexico to Manitoba—rather than the familiar mountain-rimmed valleys of today's national parks. But Catlin was ahead of his time by a generation, and nothing came of his vision of preservation for the future.

It was 1872 before the national park idea first took form in the creation of the 2,000,000-acre Yellowstone National Park. The park implemented the new, uniquely American concept of public-land use combined with natural preservation that was to spread around the world during the century which followed.

In 1971, ninety-nine years after Yellowstone's "birth," the most recently created national park—Voyageurs—was established in the Kabetogama Peninsula area of northern Minnesota. It is the nation's thirty-sixth national park, and Minnesota is the twenty-fourth state to have such a park.

Minnesota's links with the development of the national park system over the past century have been intimate and varied. The man who is credited with marshaling support for a national park at Yellowstone, for instance, is Nathaniel P. Langford, who was a Mon-

tana vigilante and western explorer before returning to St. Paul in the 1870s and eventually serving as president of the Minnesota Historical Society from 1905 until his death in 1911. During Yellowstone's first five years, Langford served without compensation as its superintendent and defended it against exploitation.

Among others with Minnesota connections who joined the ranks of the National Park Service was Conrad L. Wirth, who was director from 1951 to 1964. Wirth was the son of Theodore Wirth, Minneapolis' famed superintendent of parks for many years.

THE NATIONAL PARK EXPERIMENT is a dynamic one, but it was born of mixed motives and from the very beginning has been plagued by an inherent contradiction. In creating a national park the United States took a bold and novel step in land-use planning and public service: it set aside a sizable chunk of western real estate to be preserved as "a pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." But how does one preserve a pleasuring ground? On the one hand, idealists sought to safeguard and preserve the great scenic wonders and geographical mysteries which grew in scope and scale when contemplated with awe from distant urban centers. On the other hand, commercial interests such as railroads and concessionaires, by concentrating on the "pleasuring ground" aspect, diminished and demeaned the natural wonders through an all-too-successful effort to attract city dwellers to the parks.



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