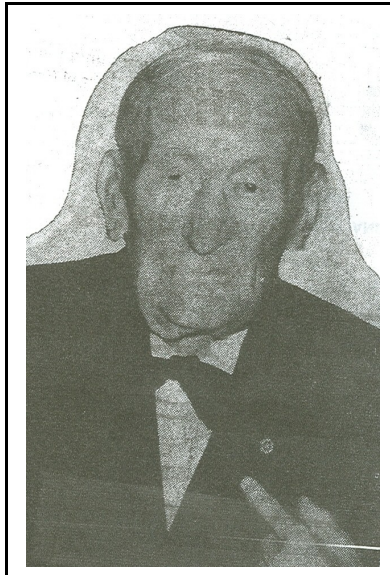


Across Oceans, Across Time® ...
Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...



Despite the vicissitudes of pioneer life, a surprisingly large number of Danish immigrants lived into their ninth and tenth decades and beyond. Hans P. Anderson, shown here, celebrated his 105th birthday on January 15, 1963, at the Danish Baptist Home in Harlan, Iowa, and at the time was thought to be the oldest man in Iowa. Born in 1858, Anderson arrived in Council Bluffs in 1880, and lived there for the next 70 years. He found work on one of the area railroads as a car inspector and repairman. Around 1890 he married a recent Danish immigrant named Christina. The couple had two children: Marie, in 1891, and Thorvald A., in 1895. Anderson moved to the Danish Home in Harlan in 1950, where he continued to take daily walks and on occasion would even ride the bus back in to Council Bluffs to visit the retired railroader's organization there. An avid newspaper reader, Anderson waited impatiently each morning for the daily paper to arrive and had decided opinions about politics. Although a Republican, he thought the country needed a man of John F. Kennedy's age in the presidency. "What we really need is to get some of those old Senators and Representatives out of office and put more young men in Washington," he told a reporter who dropped in for his birthday. Space travel sounded like "humbug" to Anderson, who predicted that mankind would never get to the moon. He had no secrets for having lived so long, but he did correspond with several other centenarians, and noted when one of them died. He made a point of avoiding television, smoked until the age of 72, and only gave up beer in his 80s before coming to the Baptist Home.

It is not known exactly when this hardy Danish American died, and further information on him and his family is sought by the Museum.