

Carl Gustav Hanner was born on August 8, 1840, in Stockholm, Sweden. His mother, Maria Lilja, was a 22-year-old maidservant, and no father's name was listed. When Carl was only a few months old, he was placed in a public orphanage in Stockholm, and unknown person paid for his care. When he was about a year old, he was sent to live with another family, but by age 5, he was back in the orphanage. He later lived with a man named Anders Petter Nilsson until he turned 14, after which he likely went out on his own.

Carl's birth name was Andersson, which was a common last name in Sweden. Later, he changed it to *Hanner* to stand out from others with the same last name. He chose the name *Hanner* after a place in Sweden called Hannas Parish (where he had lived). In Sweden, many people had last names based on their father's name or occupation. For example, the son of a man named Johan might be called *Johansson* or *Johandotter* if it's a girl. In 1901, Sweden made a law that everyone had to adopt permanent last names.

On April 17, 1869, Carl married Carolina Claesdotter in Neustadt, Hagerstad in Hannas Parish, Sweden. Just a few weeks later, they left for the United States from Goteborg, Sweden, on a steamship called *Eugenia*. After a stop in Copenhagen, Denmark, they arrived in New York City and then traveled west to settle in Altona, Illinois. They were part of a larger group of Swedish immigrants who moved to the U.S. during the late 1800s. Many Swedes left because of overcrowding in Sweden, crop failures, and a lack of land. Carl and Carolina also lived in Kewanee, Illinois, before settling in Bloomington in 1873.

Carl and Carolina had six children, but only three survived to adulthood. They lived in a neighborhood in Bloomington called *Stevensonville*, which was mostly made up of Swedish immigrants. Carl worked as a coal miner for the McLean County Coal Company. Mining was a dangerous job, and the coal industry in Bloomington was very important to the local economy.

The McLean County Coal Company was founded in 1867 and helped provide coal for the area because the recent Civil War made it difficult to get coal from other regions. The company was founded by the Stevenson brothers: James B., William, and Adlai Ewing I. It was located on the west side of Bloomington, north of Washington Street and just west of the mainline of the Chicago & Alton Railroad. The mine shafts ran to the northwest- almost to today's Rivian Automotive plant.

Coal mining was a tough job, and miners had to deal with dangers like cave-ins, mine fires, and "black damp," a condition in which dangerous gases replace oxygen. The McLean County Coal Company often had strikes where miners would stop working to protest low wages or unsafe working conditions. To break these strikes, the company brought in Swedish immigrants, like Carl, as workers. Miners were paid based on how much coal they mined, which meant their wages could change from day to day. They also usually worked six to seven days a week for ten-to-16 hour work days, with virtually no holidays off. The mine where Carl worked was on Bloomington's West Side, and it was the biggest coal mine in the area. Though mining paid well when work was steady, it was also a dangerous and uncertain job. Miners didn't always work year-round and sometimes had to find other jobs in the summer.

Many Swedish immigrants in Bloomington lived in *Stevensonville*, where they could rent or buy small homes built by the coal company. The homes were simple but affordable. Carl and his family were also active members of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bloomington, which they joined in 1875. Carl served as a deacon and taught Sunday school for many years.

After working as a coal miner for many years, Carl retired in 1915. Sadly, his wife, Caroline, died in 1916 after a short illness. Carl lived with their daughter Hulda until his own

death in 1921 at the age of 81. He passed away from heart disease and was buried next to his wife at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.