

PROFILE/APERÇU BIOGRAPHIQUE

We are very grateful to Dr. Anderson for writing the following account of his life in distance education at our request. When we heard of this champion (world champion?) distance learner we were eager to include an account of his life and achievements. We shall include similar profiles from time to time. An occasional reminder of why we are all in this business can be very salutary.

The Editors

A Canadian Life-Long Learner

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I started school in 1921, just after my seventh birthday, full of eagerness to learn to read. Both my parents read every night, as they sat around kerosene lamps. Indeed, all the neighbouring homesteading families seemed to be avid readers, and freely borrowed each others' books—and then discussed what they had read. Of course this was before the advent of radio.

Both sets of my grandparents also loved books. When my mother's mixed-heritage family came from South Dakota to homestead in southern Saskatchewan, in the second decade of this century, they brought along several high school texts. As I looked at these Latin and German grammars, a desire to learn these strange languages welled up in me. I was also drawn to the Norwegian spoken by my paternal grandparents, and longed to decipher their Norwegian Bible.

I was not unique. Reading was the "in" thing in the early times. I don't recall one pupil in our one-room country school, with eight grades and thirty pupils, who couldn't read satisfactorily. (This has impressed me the moreso since I became a specialist in remedial reading in 1962, and was actively engaged in remediation programs for over twenty years.)

In 1925, when I finished Grade VI, our inspector (the equivalent of the modern school superintendent), that year promoted the whole class into Grade VIII, having us skip Grade VII, so we had to cram huge amounts of Grade VII material, especially as related to mathematics and language arts, if we were to be ready for the Grade VIII final exams. These exams were sent out from the Department of Education, located in Regina, the provincial capital, and my mother suggested I should look into taking a correspondence course from the Department, now that I had been graduated into Grade VIII. She had been educated through home studies herself, and became qualified as a teacher in the State of Montana before age 16. She used that qualification as a home teacher for a ranch family who lived across the Saskatchewan border, in Montana. She enrolled me in Grade VIII in early January 1927, and I studied intensively, and passed the departmental examinations in June 1927.

My next problem was how to get a high school education, for we lived forty miles from the nearest Canadian high school. Some of us Grade VIII graduates went back to our elementary schools, where our teachers tried to take a little time from the other

eight grades to help us with self-study programs. School closed in December for the cold winter months, but somehow my parents discovered that the Western Extension College, a private enterprise institution in Saskatoon, had Grade IX courses.

In January 1928 I began serious study in first year high school by correspondence, meanwhile helping my father feed the cattle on our ranch. Work and study were interspersed. When springtime came around it was time to move the cattle from the home ranch to the summer pasture. There we lived in a shack, where I cooked my own meals and counted the cows day by day, to make sure none were lost or stolen.

As I went riding out to count the cattle, my school books were secure in the saddlebags. I'd stop on a high hill, let my horse graze, and study Shakespeare, Algebra, Science, and French...eight or nine subjects. My written work went to Saskatoon for correction and grading, and suggestions for further learning. I studied with the Western Extension College until the end of August. My father then arranged with a friend at La Flèche that I should work for my board and room on a dairy farm, to attend the high school. I walked into the school in La Flèche with my bundle of corrected assignments from the Western Extension College. The principal examined my work and admitted me to Grade X. After that I arose at 4 a.m. each morning to feed the cows before my long walk to school in all weather, and in three years I graduated.

In May 1934, three years following high school graduation, I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a B.A., majoring in Philosophy. I was to enter St. Andrew's Theological College in Saskatoon that September. I had done two academic years of Greek, and would be studying the New Testament in Greek. I wanted more training in the language and discovered that the University of Wisconsin had a third-year correspondence course in Greek, on Herodotus' history. Again, I enrolled, and completed the course.

I finished the diploma in Theology in 1936, and was ordained. The Bachelor of Divinity degree required an additional four years' work in St. Andrew's College, with intensive courses and a thesis. I became involved in the study of the Doctrine of Salvation, and by 1939 I had my topic. By now I was a full-time minister in a remote area, and again distance education provided the needed course work. In 1940 the thesis was completed on schedule, and the experience had motivated me toward further study.

In 1937 I was married to Edna Haverfield, my childhood sweetheart; we had grown up together as homesteading neighbors. We worked together at the church in Aylsham, and she encouraged my continued study, typing my papers and thesis. One of my professors acknowledged that Edna's typing greatly improved my work. Gifted in language, she gave me typing and editorial assistance through the years while caring for our six children.

I was located on a parish near the Alberta border when I decided to explore the possibility of doing a Master's program, through distance education, with the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The head of the philosophy department, Dr. J. MacEachran, allowed me to register in his History of Philosophy on the basis of home study, with an occasional conference and the writing of papers. Dr.

MacEachran was in the habit of mimeographing his lectures, to encourage class discussion, so I had the benefit of his copious notes throughout that successful year of studies.

My appetite for learning was still not satisfied and I continued with the unorthodox distance education arrangement, completing courses in Contemporary Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion. My interest in both philosophy and education converged in Glendive, Montana, where I taught philosophy at the Dawson County Junior College from 1947 to 1954. It seemed desirable for college teachers to have courses in education, so I enrolled in a survey course at the University of Montana, in Missoula. My enthusiasm for this course led me to Dean Linus Carleton of the School of Education, asking to be admitted to graduate level courses. Using the same tactic I'd used to get into Grade X, I showed up for our meeting with a bundle of returned home-study exercises about two feet thick in volume. Dean Carleton expressed sympathy for my tutor... "to think he had to read all that!", but he admitted me as a provisional student, and the following year I was a candidate for the Master's of Education.

In partial completion of my Master's requirements I was again permitted to do correspondence study. Professor Hahn of the University of Utah taught a distance education class on Comparative Education in which I enrolled; he subsequently supervised my home study of the educational system in the U.S.S.R.

As a means of completing a Psychological Testing Course I left the campus and did testing in Canada, with monthly conferences with my professor in Montana. I was also able to study the Canadian educational system as a home-based activity. And having completed the Master's degree, in 1959, I looked forward to entering the Doctorate program. I realized that a reading knowledge of German was advantageous to doctoral students and so I took a course through the Saskatchewan government's correspondence school. I thus was able to complete Grades IX, X, and XI in German before commencing the doctoral program in the spring of 1960.

From 1968 to 1973 I took the opportunity to teach in Jamaica, continuing to work on my thesis and eventually transferring my degree program to the University of West Indies. I received the degree at age 60, by which time I was working as a psychologist and minister in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

In the summer of 1983, a new pleasure entered my life. I discovered my paternal ancestral home in Norway. My great-grandparents came to America in 1849 and 1851, and of their more than one thousand descendants, it was my privilege to be the first North American to find the Norwegian home, still completely intact. There I met my great-grandfather's brother's grandchildren, of my age group. None of these cousins, who live in a rural mountain area, could speak English, nor I Norwegian, but fortunately one cousin has a daughter who, like other Norwegians in their 30s, speaks English.

I returned to Norway in 1983, and when I went home I vowed I would not return a third time until I could converse with these cousins. In August '84 I enrolled in the University of Minnesota correspondence courses, with tapes, in the Norwegian language. After completing the two courses offered by Minnesota I found that the University of Washington in Seattle offered a third-year course, which I am now

finishing. In May of this year I returned to Norway and was able to converse with my cousins—not very fluently, but intelligibly. They clapped at my efforts.

I applaud distance educators, for it was they who helped me embark on my life as a perpetual student. I enrolled in distance education when I was unable to find what I needed on my campus, or when geography precluded classroom attendance, or when my professional obligations prevented it. This is not to say that distance education is appropriate only for those who are unable to satisfy their educational requirements in the classroom. On the contrary, my experience is that correspondence study is often more effective than classroom learning. The materials are often more exacting and comprehensive than classroom lectures, and one therefore gains a greater chance of a comprehensive knowledge and understanding. The attention I received from the instructor or tutor was more personal than is normally possible in a crowded classroom. The adult who aspires to serious scholarship may have no interest in attending school but may need the guidance of an expert. My interests in cosmology, and languages, have been wonderfully guided by distance educators. Distance education is still a viable learning method for me, at three score years and ten. My appreciation of distance education began actively for me when I was thirteen years old and desired a high school education, and continues at age 72 when I strive to be fluent in my ancestors' language.