
Andrew Richards

(An Obituary)

[events of July 6-9, 1916]

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As gently and as naturally as a babe falls asleep on its mother's breast, Comrade Andrew Richards, father of Kate Richards O'Hare, passed out of this life at the Barnes Hospital, St. Louis, on Thursday evening, July 6th [1916].

Seventy years of toil and stress, love and labor, endless struggling to make this a better world and the sweet companionship and deep happiness that is the lot of those who live deeply and well had filled out Comrade Richards' life until its passing was simply the falling of a ripened fruit back to the bosom of Mother Earth.

Andrew Richards was a man who had fought the battles of the downtrodden and oppressed through all his long, eventful years. Born of a slave-owning family, he hated negro slavery, and when yet too young to carry a musket he sounded the bugle calls and played the drum that cheered the older men who battled for human freedom. From the first call for volunteers until the closing days of the Civil War he served the cause of humanity as he understood it then.

When the war was over he married the sweetheart of his youth, loaded his scanty goods and chattels into covered wagons, and went out to the western frontier of Kansas; there he helped to subdue the wilderness and lay the foundation of that great state. Here five children were born and reared and trained for lives of usefulness.

For more than 50 years he fearlessly faced the road of progress and trod it with unwavering feet. Anything or any movement that seemed to offer hope of betterment for humanity found in him an able and fearless champion.

Twenty years ago he helped to organize a Socialist section in Kansas City.¹

¹ Use of the word "Section" implies a local unit of the Socialist Labor Party of America, the main American Marxist political organization of the 1890s.

Because Andrew Richards lived his religion, which was simply the Brotherhood of Man, and expressed his Socialism in every thought and act of life, he was a powerful propagandist. He enjoyed what few men know — absolute harmony with all the members of his family. The funeral took place from the home of Comrade Frank P. O'Hare, 4201 Maryland Avenue, on Sunday afternoon [July 9, 1916], and about his casket were gathered his wife, Lucy Richards; his sons, John and Clarence; his daughters, Kate Richards O'Hare, Cora Brown, and Jessie Richards Duproz; their wives and husbands and the grandchildren.

Comrades Otto Vierling and Harry Tichenor conducted the services, and Comrades Phil Wagner, G.A. Hoehn, H.M. Tichenor, J.A. Phillips, Charles Loewe, and M. Sager served as pallbearers. All that was mortal of Comrade Andrew Richards was reduced to ashes at the crematory.

One of the grand old workers of the Socialist movement has passed on to the great beyond, but his children still live, and the kindly influence of his life will reach down all the ages.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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