

Kolbjorn¹ Braaten² and Berit Jorgenson, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

From Festskrift³:

Kolbjorn Braaten, from Hallingdal. Came to Rice County, Minnesota, to Norway Lake 1866. Married with Berit Jorgenson from Trondhjem. Came to Goodhue County, Minnesota 1865, to Norway Lake 1867.

The ministerial book of the Ness, Hallingdal Prestigjeld⁴ has a baptism record:

Colbjörn, son of Neils Olsen and Gjertrud Colbjoernsdatter Havnsbraaten, was born Dec 5, 1850 and baptised Jan 5, 1851.

Findagrave.com has a grave marker in the West Norway Lake Lutheran Church, inscribed:

Braaten, Kolbjorn 1850 – 1931; Beret 1850 – 1921. The reporter added Kolbjorn's birth and death dates, Dec 4, 1850, Aug 8, 1831. For Beret, there is an additional marker inscribed: BORN Mar 2, 1858, DIED Mar 13, 1921.

The immigration date is 1858, as shown in the record⁵ from the Nes Church in Hallingdal, Buskerud, Norway in which Nils Olsen Liabraaten age 27, Gjertrud Colbjørnsdatter 33, Colbjørn 5, Ole 3 departed from that church on 8 April 1858. The destination given was "Amerika."

There is a Bereth Andersdatter Wennamarken⁶, age 12½, aboard the bark *Bergen* that sailed from Trondheim on May 14, 1865 and arrived in Quebec on July 3. Others aboard were her parents Anders Jørgensen (39) and Marit Andersdatter (40), and siblings Sirri (7), John (6), Ann (3) and Martha (6 months)

Marriage at Norway Lake⁷, 17 Feb 1871:

Colbjörn Nilsen Braaten födt 5th Dec 1849 I Sigdal⁸ Prestgj. Bergit Andreasdatter fraa det 21 aar gml födt I Thronhjem.

In the 1875 "New London"⁹ Minnesota census¹⁰ we find:

Kolbjorn Nelson (age 24), Berit (24), Gjertrude (3), Marie (1), Nels (0);

also a family that closely matches Bereth's (in the passenger list cited above).

There are several noteworthy censuses of Kerkhoven Township, Swift County:

- 1895 "Kolbjorern" Nelson (age 44), Beret (44), and Gunhild (16).
- 1905 Colbjorn Brotan (age 54, 47 years in state), Berit Brotan (54, 40?), and Mable Thompson (6, 6).
- 1910 Colbjorn Nilson (age 59, immig 1857), wife Berit (59, 1866), and brother Ole Nilson (57, 18??). The two have been married 37 years. Berit is the mother of 5, all living.
- 1920 "Cobbjorn Broten" (age 70 immigrated in 1857). Also listed: wife Beret (age 68, immig. 1865) and single son Andreas (age 43).
- 1930 "Kjolbjorn" Nelson (age 79, immig 185?) is a lodger in the household of Erick and Tekla Sandeen.

Kolbjorn's final days are discussed in a pair of 1931 newspaper articles¹¹. In the first, it is reported that on July 20th the 81 year old "Colbjorn Broten" was attacked by two assailants. Kolbjorn was transported to his daughter's place where he died on August 8th. Before passing he named the assailants who were then arrested. In the 2nd article the assailants are named, one of whom was Kolbjorn's brother Ole. It was further reported that the case was dismissed due to insufficient evidence.

In summary, Kolbjorn was born December 5, 1850 on one of the Braaten farms in Ness Parish, Hallingdal, Norway. He and Berit were married in the Arctander Old Log Church in 1871. They lived most of their life in Kerkhoven Township, Swift County, MN. Records indicate they had 5 children, but those names are not all known.

Berit was born probably in 1852 (year not certain) near Trondheim, Norway, and immigrated with her parents and whole family in 1865. Her parents settled in Norway Lake Township, Kandiyohi County, MN.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson, November 2017

1 Also spelled "Colbjorn" or variants thereof.

2 Broten, Nilsen and Nelson appear in the various records.

3 *Festskrift - En Fremstilling at det Kirkelige Arbeide Norway Lake fra 1862-1916.* Ved Pastorerne Mons Sotendahl og N.J. Njus. Partial translation by Debbie Boe at [http://www.debbiesgenealogy.com/Norway Lake Lutheran Churches 1862-1916.htm](http://www.debbiesgenealogy.com/Norway_Lake_Lutheran_Churches_1862-1916.htm).

4 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/1110/209>, Nes kirkebøker, F/Fa/L0009: Ministerialbok nr. 9, 1834-1863, s. 199

5 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/1110/644>

6 Norwayheritage.com

7 Page 302 of Minister's logbook of First Norway Lake Lutheran Church, viewed via Ancestry.com.

8 Sigdal is not correct. As noted above the birthplace is Ness, Hallingdal.

9 New London is not correct; careful examination of the census' front pages show that it was Norway Lake Township

10 All census records were viewed via Ancestry.com

11 Willmar Weekly Tribune, August 22 and 29, 1931.