

Knut Knudsen Espeseth & Mari Andersdatter, Charter Members of West Norway Lake Lutheran Church

In *Festskrift*¹, the following sentences appear consecutively²:

- The following came here in 1876: Knute Knutsen Espeseth, from Hallingdal. Married with Maria Skaattermoen, from Hallingdal. Came to Iowa 1863.
- Knut Knutsen Espeseth, from Hallingdal. Came with his parents. Married Martha Hamburg, from Land. Came to Norway lake 1880.”

(Other records – see below – indicate they came to Norway Lake much earlier, perhaps in 1867.)

In a county history book³, Knudt (Espeseth) Knudsen is listed as a homesteader, July 10, 1868, Section 26 of Norway Lake Township. In the 1870 Agricultural census, Knud Espeseth has 15 acres of improved land in Norway Lake Township, Monongalia County.

In the 1870 census⁴ of Norway Lake Township, Monongalia County, MN there are:

Knud Espeseth (age 48, farmer), Marit (41, keeping house), Sigr (16, at home), Knud (15, at home), Margit (11, at home), Gunhild (10), Anne (7), Kari (4), Christine (2), and Arne (1 month).

(The record, handwritten, is faded and hard to read.)

There are several records pertaining to this family in the books of Nes Parish in Hallingdal, Buskerud, Norway.⁵. The "utflyttede" record⁶ shows that the family left that church on April 16, 1861, bound for America. This list, partly reproduced at right, is packed with information. Clearly, this is the same family as in the 1870 census, as the names agree and the ages roughly agree.

We can surmise that the first Arne died prior to 1870 and the name was recycled for the son born in 1870.

Six of the Espeseth children are listed in Norway Lake church records⁷

- Knut K., confirmed 1872;
- Margit K., married 1872 to Christian Lukkassen;
- Sigrid K. married 1872 to Endre S. Lukken.
- Ole, baptised 1873;
- Anne K., married 1882 to John J. Vik;
- Gunhild K., confirmed 1886, married 1889 to Ole O. Flolo;

Additionally, there are these listings under Knutsen:

- Arne, baptised 1870;
- Margit and Sigr, confirmed together in 1870.

Note that several of these events took place prior to 1875, that is in the predecessor church, the Log Church.

There are grave markers⁸ at the West Norway Lake cemetery inscribed *Knud K. Espeset* and *Mari Andersdatter Espeset*. The date of death listed on the Knud's marker is Apr 20, 1886. Sadly, no dates are recorded on Mari's marker.

Report prepared by Earl O. Knutson.

From the Utflyttede list, 16 April, 1861		
Given Name	Patronymic	Birth Date
Knud	Knudsen	24Mar1826
Mari	Andersdatter	7Mar1830
Sigrid		13Feb1853
Knud		18Sep1854
Margit		3 Sep1856
Arne		15Sep1858
Gunhild		13Jan1861

- 1 "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%20Lake%20Lutheran%20Churches%201862-1916.htm).
- 2 It develops that these two are father and son and it is not certain which one was the charter member. We will assume it is the father since he would have been about 52 in 1875 when the congregation was formed, whereas the son would have been about 20.
- 3 Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County 1905, page 343. Viewed at <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15160coll5/id/944>
- 4 Accessed through Ancestry.com
- 5 This information was uncovered by Jackie Marler, genealogist for Hallinglag. Large thanks are due to her, because there were three Knud Knudsens of about the same age in the Nes parish, and each had a son named Knud Knudsen, who were also of about the same age. The opportunities for confusion were astronomical. Ms. Marler also found the baptism records for most of those listed in the utflyttede record. Knud's parents were Knud Arnesen and Sigr Knudsdatter Espeset. Mari's parents were Anders Johnson and Gunhil Andersdatter Skaaterudmoen. Knud and Mari's marriage record has the date March 11, 1853.
- 6 <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/kb20051114011309>. The place name cited for the family was hard to read; either Skaalerud or Skaaterud.
- 7 *Keeping the Faith, Sharing the Faith, 1862-1992*. Published by the First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake. New London, MN
- 8 Findagrave.com